

BYE-WAYS OF STUDY

DARRELL J. GIGGS

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

Class Mark *s/* PR 6011 : I4

Book Number 173332

STRATFORD, E. 15.

Open on Weekdays from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. (except on Wednesdays, Public Holidays, and from the 1st to the 14th August).

BORROWERS' Tickets are not transferable. No book can be issued without the presentation of the Ticket.

Wrappers are necessary to protect the books from injury in their conveyance to and from the Library.

Books will not be entrusted to children under eleven years of age, and Borrowers are requested, as far as possible, to make personal application, as many accidents occur through the carelessness of messengers. This Book must be returned to the Stratford Library.

Any damage done to Books will be charged to the *last borrower*. Borrowers should therefore examine the Books and call attention to any fault, in order that *they* may not be charged with the same. Special notice of any scribbling in the Books is desired, in order to assist in tracing the offender.

A Borrower detaining a Book beyond the time allowed for reading will be fined ONE PENNY per Week or part of a Week such time is exceeded, and if not returned in Four Weeks from date of issue, a Printed Notice will be sent to such Borrower, who will be required to defray expenses.

Borrowers are particularly desired to note the Dates on the Register Labels in order to return or renew the Books in time to avoid the fines, which are necessarily enforced.

Time allowed for reading this Book FOURTEEN

PRESENTED TO
THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM
BY
West Ham Central Library
(B.N.B.C.)

1959.

60 0272601 1

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM



WITHDRAWN
FROM THE LIBRARY



Bye-Ways of Study

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

WITHDRAWN

FROM THE LIBRARY

By the same Author

POETRY :

- A VISION OF LIFE. (1909).
THE CRUCIBLES OF TIME. (1911).
QUEEN TARA : A Tragedy. (1913).
THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION. (1915).
TEIGUE : A Play in One Act. (1915).

NOVELS

- BROKEN ARCS. (1911).
JACOB ELTHORNE. (1914).
CHILDREN OF EARTH. (1918).

GENERAL :

- SHAKESPEARE : A Study. (1911).
STUDIES AND APPRECIATIONS. (1912).
"Æ" : A Study of a Man and a Nation. (1916).
A CHRONICLE OF JAILS. (1917).
THE GAELIC STATE IN THE PAST AND FUTURE.
(1917).
THE HISTORIC CASE FOR IRISH INDEPENDENCE.
(1918).

Bye-Ways of Study

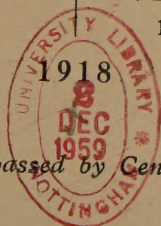
By
DARRELL FIGGIS

824



DUBLIN
The Talbot Press Ltd.
89 Talbot Street

LONDON
T. Fisher Unwin Ltd.
1 Adelphi Terrace



As passed by Censor

89/54
P24
~~DISCARDED~~

Printed at
THE TALBOT PRESS, LTD.
89 Talbot Street
Dublin

Contents

	Page
Charles Stewart Parnell	1
Francis Thompson	25
The Letters of George Meredith	44
"For Demand of Peace: or Else Not"	64





INTRODUCTION.

THE four essays assembled in this volume appeared first in other places, some of them in other guises. The first, on Parnell, appeared as a review of certain volumes in *The Nineteenth Century, and After*. It appeared on July 1st, 1914. The Essay on Francis Thompson appeared in an abbreviated form in *The Contemporary Review*, and, as it is printed in this book, in *The North American Review*. So with the Essay on George Meredith's Letters, part of which appeared as a review in *The Times Literary Supplement*, and all, as it now stands, in *The North American Review*. A skeleton of the last Essay, omitting much necessary to the understanding of a critical moment in the nation's history, appears in the current number of *Studies*.

Gathering them together now it is my due to thank these various editors for their hospitality, though it is possible that some of them, knowing of the abode from which I now write, may receive these thanks with some truculency. Yet we never know what strangers we entertain unawares. Nor, as the recent celebrations of American Independence Day make one realise, do we quite know at what precise

moment dark fiends go to swell the angel-choirs. The Clown forgot to add that the whirligig of Time brings more than its revenges: it brings its recognitions. For, eyeing these slammed doors and thinking of olden hospitality, I wonder a little if it be indeed true that the ubiquitous Czecho-Slovaks have a monopoly of the patriotic virtues. Because, if so, it seems a hardship to the world that the Lord should have hid them until now.

However, lest one of those with whom I sat at meat before the world went mad should think I have done him an injustice, let me say that I have re-written the latter end of the Essay on Parnell. I have added nothing essential. I have subtracted nothing essential. I have altered nothing essential. I have merely made more clear and explicit what appeared in the original form of the article. Modern Civilisation, seen to such splendid advantage on the fields of Europe, has decided that the truth about men shall not be told, except with infinite care, while they live. It has armed itself with heavy damages to make sure that the rule be observed. History therefore lags upon their heels. It waits with averted glance till the last sod is piled above their clay, and then hastens to march across their graves. As it befell, it need not, in this case, have waited long. For Chamberlain died on July 3rd, 1914; and so, as the world reckons, another gate was flung down before the Tramp of Truth.

The tale unfolded in the latter end of this Essay, therefore, now belongs to History: the tale of the ceaseless and unscrupulous attempts of little men to snare a bonny fighter in a bonny cause. From before the Pigott case to the end (since, in fact, it was discovered that the Kilmainham Treaty was the Kilmainham Treaty, and no more: that Parnell still stood outside the English social and political machine; lethargic, it may be, but uncorrupted) it is not only true to say that the snares were continuous, it would probably be more true to say that the snare was one. Every blow was foul; but the foulness moved in crescendo. The prelude to the last blow, the threat and stealth of it, was revealed for the first time in Captain O'Shea's letters. It lies also in other letters and documents. It is a horrible tale—literally a horrible tale—a blackmail unilluminated by even so much as a recollection of honour. But then, since when have Irishmen doing battle for Ireland ever received honour? One thinks of Hugh O'Neill and Chichester, and of Parnell and Chamberlain, and the repetitions of history become almost monotonous.

The last essay in this collection, "For Demand of Peace: or Else Not," suggests, by its very incompleteness, an interesting history. Working through the Calendars of State Papers on May 10th, 1916, at about one o'clock that night I came across these documents. They arrested me, tired as I was, and at once linked themselves in the chain at which

I was working. I made a resolve to test that chain on the morrow; recorded my notes; and turned to bed. I had hardly slept more than two hours when some twenty valiant men charged with glittering steel and thundering stride upon two tired sleepers and a score of querulous chickens and hens.

The following year I sought to put my notes together, when once again I was taken on foreign travel. This time the latitude of the city of Oxford was allowed me. At first the Librarian conceived that a man professing the doctrine of Sinn Fein could have no other use for the Bodleian Library than to burn it and knife the staff; but in the end he proved kindness and courtesy itself in guiding me through the treasures over which he presides. So the chain was nearly completed; yet ere it was completed the travels began again. Hence there are two or three references that I had wished to document when the time came to publish the essay. It is of the first importance that all writing on Irish history should be fully and carefully documented, if only to be protected from readable fairy-tales such as Froude's. But it was ordained otherwise. The proofs for *Studies* were corrected hastily near midnight while men with revolvers stood over me; and my present address is not convenient for purposes of research.

D. F.

DURHAM JAIL,

14th July, 1918.



BYE-WAYS OF STUDY

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL.¹



READERS of these two volumes, with any respect for the remarkable personality from whom alone they derive their interest, will rise from their scrutiny with very mixed feelings. It is a difficult question how far anyone who has deliberately chosen a public career—whatever the deliberation or however inevitable the choice—may claim exemption from those who would set him out, in all his ways, for the most ruthless examination. It is with the luck of his stars how much of his privacy he may be able to withhold from that subsequent lack of mercy. He cannot claim that mercy, from friend or foe : but he certainly ought to be entitled to it from those who loved the touch of his hand. He ought to be entitled to it in fact and in detail. If there is one

¹ *Charles Stewart Parnell and his Love Story and Political Life.* By Katherine O'Shea (Mrs. Charles Stewart Parnell). Two vols. Cassell and Co.

thing certain more than another it is this, that Parnell himself would rather have suffered any torture than have contemplated the publication of these volumes. The lady who took the decision to publish tells us that she did so in order to repel the charge made by William O'Brien that Parnell was 'rather the victim than the destroyer of a happy home.' It is not quite certain that she succeeds in her intention; but, in any case, we know what Parnell's reply to such a charge would have been; and we may ask with some show of justice why his decision, unheard but not hard to guess, should not claim the right to enforce itself. Yet even if one concedes this central fact, there are attendant matters that make one pause. The story might have been told, and told with far fuller and more satisfactory detail than it has, and yet have been given with a reticent dignity of manner. Instead of which it has been exploited (serialised is the technical term employed) with the grossest disregard of dignity. Moreover, Parnell won at a considerable cost, to himself and to the country he loved and others love, the right that the lady he loved should wear his name: it may or may not be a worthy thing, but he paid for it: and it is somewhat surprising, therefore, to see that lady claim the authorship of these volumes as 'Katherine O'Shea.' So the continual reference to Captain O'Shea as 'Willie' may be no more than a mis-step; but it is not a happy mis-step.

However, we are not concerned with William O'Brien's words in the cryptic remark we have quoted. Save for one cloudy moment, at the deception attending the birth of his child, it is certain that Parnell comes out of the ordeal of his exposure here clearer than ever before; better understood; and to be understood is, at the bar of the heart, the noblest, perhaps the only, acquittal for which any man may look. He would not have wished such an acquittal, the circumstances being as they are; he was not of that stuff; but the fact remains, nevertheless. We are given a key with which we may unlock the doors which he shut against the world; and we discover nothing of shame, but much to wonder at in a man who was simplicity itself, yet who seemed so subtle and complex in his ways, and in the end comes before us as one of the few pure geniuses, spontaneous and unerring, of the latter end of the nineteenth century. Others who pass through these pages do not survive that ordeal so satisfactorily. For example, some of the virtuous robes are plucked from Gladstone's nakedness. He stood forward, in his famous letter to John Morley that wrought Parnell's downfall, as the shocked defender of the purity of English homes against this man whom the Divorce Court had so suddenly revealed as a trafficker in uprightness. Either this wicked man must go, so runs the purport of the letter, or he himself must surrender the leadership of the Liberal Party rather than work in

collaboration with him. But now we discover that Gladstone had been working in collaboration with Parnell, *on the basis of this knowledge and by the agency of the very relationship it implied*, for nearly nine years previous to the letter, since the Kilmainham Treaty. That Treaty was partly conducted through Mrs. O'Shea; whenever thereafter Gladstone wished to discover Parnell he turned at once to Mrs. O'Shea; he received letters from Parnell continuously addressed from Mrs. O'Shea's house at Eltham, manifestly as from a resident there; and, in one infinitely risible scene, we discover him marching up and down the long room at Downing Street arm in arm with Mrs. O'Shea discussing what working arrangement he could come to with 'her friend,' whom alone she represented, as she explained, without any further interest in the political situation they discussed.² In short, that all these heroics of his, these gestures protesting a national righteousness that defied pollution, were but part of a trick to break a political opponent and so baulk a nation's demand.

There are other personalities engaged that belong

² It is true that we need not accept the bare statement of these books. Unhappily, however, the statement is neither bare nor unsupported. It is supported by letters, notes, and a highly complicated collateral reference that it would be very difficult to fabricate. Apart from which there are the implications of Captain O'Shea's letters to his wife in the curious chapter to which subsequent reference is made.

to some of the serious issues raised in the latter end of these two volumes. They are for subsequent examination. Yet, whoever suffers in reputation in the recital (and there is the noise of breaking glass throughout), the one man who gains is the one man who has to bear the terrible ordeal of the printing of his most intimate letters throughout an unbroken love story of eleven years. He was, happily for humanity, no rose-pink saint. He never gathered, nor gathers now, that kind of smug reputation about him over which men become so spasmodically and insincerely delirious, mainly because it affects the general tenour of their lives so little. He was, if we will, a very frail and faulty man—though not so frail as faulty; but he was at least a man, and not a halo shaped into the semblance of a man. Yet, whatever his faults, they are not those that have been laid to his charge. Far from being sexually loose, he was, if anything, a fierce and uncompromising monogamist. Of how many men can it be said that, throughout eleven years of a harassed story, his letters at the end are as infinitely tender, as thoughtful and as laughterful, as they were at the beginning? He did not, as the world knows, lack traducers; but it would be interesting to look into the hearts of the wives of those traducers in this regard. He played the lover tenderly to the end. Two telegrams a day—one infallibly to bid Good-night—and generally a letter, whenever he was absent in

Ireland or detained in London, and continuously so to the very end, is a record that might well knock the weapons out of the hands of the best, or worst, of his haters, had they but the rare faculty of looking within their own hearts.

With such a record the gravamen of the charge against him becomes one of formal doctrine; and here the natural instinct of his mind met challenge with challenge. Mrs. Parnell says :

Parnell's moral standard was a high one, if it is once conceded that as regards the marriage bond his honest conviction was that there is none where intense mutual attraction—commonly called love—does not exist—or *where it has ceased to exist*. To Parnell's heart and conscience I was no more the wife of Captain O'Shea when he (Parnell) first met me than I was after Captain O'Shea had divorced me ten years later. He took nothing from Captain O'Shea that the law of the land could give, or could dispossess him of, therefore he did him no wrong.

His contemporaries for the most part have lost the right to have their criticisms entered: they knew all along, and they condoned; and they were even willing perhaps (as we shall see) to threaten him with their knowledge for their own ends. They remove themselves from court. We of a later generation are content to understand; and it is an essential part of that understanding to see that he met a moral objection with a purely moral, and it may even be said a highly moral, challenge. He raised a question of

first principles; and when, in addition to the fact that Mrs. O'Shea only saw her husband socially at her invitation, we find Captain O'Shea taking occasion to complain that his wife was having his flat in town watched by detectives, the question of first principles, as discovered in action respectively in the two men engaged, is illustrated rather appositely. The uncomfortable moment, that must be faithfully recorded, is in the deception practised while Parnell was in Kilmainham with regard to his child. It is quite clear that the secrecy for ten years was a necessity imposed by the cause Parnell served, which was more than himself or his happiness; and it may be said that this particular deception ranks in with the larger issue; but there is another aspect that is both unpleasant and unsavoury. It is certain, however, that no one felt it more than Parnell himself. He was not exactly the kind of man who shirked open issues; and what the stress of secrecy meant to him may be seen in that terrible scene Mrs. Parnell records, when in a storm on Brighton Pier he in a sudden passion wished to throw both himself and her into the surge of the sea in order to be 'free for ever.'

It is from the record of such scenes as these that these books take their best value. It has become a kind of accepted custom to speak of Parnell as a typical Englishman, presumably because his manner was cold, his thought cautious, and his purpose relentless. Pedigrees apart, an Irishman may be permitted

to contemplate the Mafficking celebrations and to look at Parnell, and to wonder; whereas in parts of the West of Ireland it is rather the rule than the exception to find men of relentless passion and a reserved cautious exterior, with a pure Gaelic ancestry. It is no wonder at all to find Parnell addressing such men with perfect understanding; and we scarcely need his repeated declaration to perceive his utter lack of sympathy with the Saxon mind. Apart from all theories, these are the simple facts of the situation; and now, in the light of the most private revelations, such facts become part of the whole problem of the man's personality. Instead of lacking tenderness, he is seen as a man of the wildest, even of the most tremendous, tenderness. Instead of being cold he is discovered as a man of volcanic passion, but with the whole of that passion held in check, and forced to a particular end, by a steel-like will—a will that was perhaps helped by his natural reserve and caution. The ruling force of the man was passion; but a passion that he set out to discipline and direct, not because he thoroughly understood the foes against whom he contended, as it has been said, but because he distrusted them so fundamentally,—if, indeed, the two things are not really one. He did not derive his faith in a hostile campaign, in forcing and relentless methods, from an intelligence of the opposing forces, but from a close observation of them. It was the tactician, not the understanding

temperament, who perceived that point; and it was perceived during the first few seemingly driftless years in Parliament, when he saw the calm scorn with which Isaac Butt was held at arm's length. Then the tactician saw the difference there would be if a well-directed force were driven into the very midst of that form-respecting ceremony that seemed so invincible; the cynical humourist saw the joy of such an enterprise; and the man of passion knew that, if the project were to fail, it would be better to fail so than to persist in the other fatuity. In willing the end he willed the means, ruthlessly; he brought the touch of reality; and that is rather a Celtic than a Saxon quality, whatever the man's ancestry.

When the proud reserved man stood with his back to the wall, in the famous meeting in the Committee Room Fifteen, defending himself against those from whom he had a right to expect loyalty, he declared, 'My position has been granted to me not because I am a mere leader of a parliamentary party, but because I am the leader of the Irish nation.' He never spoke more truly. When the Irish people disagreed with him most they yet understood him. They understood the man even when they were in the dark as to his plans: they understood that he himself probably was not better aware than they what his next move would be, and that he waited on the turn of the issue as they waited on him. They trusted him; and he understood them, and he knew how far to go with them.

When he took up the cause of the Irish peasantry he did not merely stand for and on behalf of them, as anyone judging from his aloofness might have conceived. There are no people in the world more quick to detect and resent that attitude than the Irish peasantry. He stood with them. Behind his reserve, even because of that reserve, they knew that instantly; and in his spare direct phraseology he touched them as they in their reserve touch one another. Daniel O'Connell swept his audiences with him (usually, a good deal in advance of him) by the hot torrent of his oratory; but Charles Stewart Parnell did not address them, he spoke to them in words that were a form of action, and they understood him perfectly.

These things pre-suppose a strong personality, since in the negation of attributes there is no virtue. Affection is not aroused by a lack of affection; nor is trust aroused by a lack of sympathy. In single cases the contrary may occur; but it will not long maintain itself. In Parnell's case it was a whole people who loved and trusted him: even the leaders, such as Michael Davitt at one time, and Justin MacCarthy at another, who disagreed with him, and opposed him, did so in pain and with deep feeling. Moreover, he won his position with no specious haste; but slowly and reservedly. Not with any violent speed did he become 'the leader of the Irish nation.' His arrogance did not actually prohibit that (for it is just to say that in Ireland, though men are arrogant, they make better allowance for the

arrogance of others), but it made sympathy more difficult to adjust. Yet when his position was won it was secure. When the decree went out against him in the name of Faith (that old oppression had made a first loyalty) it was heeded grudgingly; and is remembered to this hour with resentment. And these things are not done by a man as devoid of feeling as Parnell has been supposed to be. He was a man with his mind made up. 'No one could flatter Parnell,' these volumes say, 'neither could anyone humiliate him. "What I am I am, what I am not I cannot be," was his summing up of his own and of every other man's personality.' They add: 'His cold, scientific way of sorting out and labelling his own party at first made me hesitatingly complain, "But, after all, they are human beings!" and his characteristic reply was, "In politics, as in war, there are no men, only weapons."' A man has a right to treat others as he is willing to treat himself; and there is no doubt that, even in the days when he stood to defend himself, he treated himself consistently as a weapon. He was willing that the weapon should be cast aside if value were got in exchange, for then the weapon would have completed its service. He had polished, refined and tempered that weapon; and as he subordinated himself to the cause he served, so, with equal ruthlessness, he subordinated all others. The rightness or wrongness of the method thus becomes the rightness or wrongness of the cause; and on that he had made

up his mind decisively. This does not mean that human emotion was absent; but only that it was bent to a purpose. The basis of it all was a powerful human emotion. It was out of that metal the sword was cast. From without, the emotion could not be discovered save in the relentless form in which it was couched; and we must first break the veil he hung before the world to discover what that emotion could be when it had no end to serve.

There, beyond the political questions, lies the final value of these two books. Despite the natural suspicion with which the mind regards them, in the circumstance and manner of their publication, based, as they undoubtedly are, on authentic information, we look within them for news of Parnell the man, with his armour doffed, and the fight laid by awhile. We wish to learn every detail of him caught thus. We could have been spared some of the details we feel so sure he would have withheld angrily from our knowledge, to learn more of the man that is proper to our understanding. For example, almost as though by accident it slips out that he was naturally a very indolent man.

He was [says Mrs. Parnell] constitutionally lazy, and absolutely loathed beginning anything. . . . He always made me promise to 'worry' him into making a start on any important political work, meeting, or appointment. . . . He used to comfort me by assuring me that it was only the 'beginnings' he hated, and that he was all right, when he was 'once started.'

A strong will, 'once started,' a great genius, and constitutional indolence, are not an infrequent conjunction; but seen beside his resistless energy in any work to which he set his hand, even his blindness to such a thing as physical disability, such as killed him in the end, the mind catches that paradox that always lies near the red heart of humanity. It is just such intimacies as these, that would be unsuspected by those who had to meet him in the arena, that best reveal a man to us; that make him human and believable, not a merely negligible person with a halo, to be regarded with mingled respect and distrust from a distance; for they take us to the point of departure from his fellows.

Yet, though he was hard to arouse, once aroused he never looked back. The course he entered upon he not only prosecuted with characteristic energy, but also with that curious sense of fatality that was so strong a part of his temperament. One such occasion was the trial of the 'Manchester Martyrs,' which touched him deeply, sent him into Parliament, and caused his first outbreak when in Parliament. The other occasion may best be described in Mrs. Parnell's own words :

We gave several dinners, and to each of them I asked Mr. Parnell. . . . Mr. Parnell did not come. Someone alluded to the 'vacant chair,' and laughingly defied me to fill it; the rest of our guests took up the tale and vied with each other in tales of the inaccessibility of Parnell, of how he even ignored

the invitations of the most important hostesses in London, and of his dislike of all social intercourse—though he had mixed freely in society in America and Paris before he became a politician for the sake of the Irish poor. I then became determined that I would get Parnell to come, and said, amid laughter and applause, ‘The uncrowned King of Ireland shall sit in that chair at the next dinner I give.’ One bright sunny day, when the House was sitting, I drove, accompanied by my sister, Mrs. Steele to the House of Commons and sent in my card asking Mr. Parnell to come out and speak to us in the Palace Yard. He came out, a tall, gaunt, figure, thin and deadly pale. He looked straight at me smiling, and his curiously burning eyes looked into mine with wondering intentness that threw into my brain the sudden thought, ‘This man is wonderful—and different.’ I asked him why he had not answered my last invitation to dinner, and if nothing would induce him to come. He answered that he had not opened his letters for days, but if I would let him he would come to dinner directly he returned from Paris. . . . In leaning forward in the cab to say good-bye a rose I was wearing in my bodice fell out on my skirt. He picked it up and, touching it lightly with his lips, placed it in his buttonhole. This rose I found long years afterwards done up in an envelope, with my name and date, among his most private papers, and when he died I laid it upon his heart.*

*It is unnecessary to repeat that in quoting such passages as this one does not pledge them a literal credence. If nothing else, the manner of their writing would deny them that. Yet there is no reason to doubt that something of the sort occurred. And certainly they tax the credulity far less than the carefully shaped Haloes, tricked out with the antics of automata, and pranked always in righteousness, sinless and sunless, that fill the shelf of English Biography.

These were the two influences that caught him, as he would have thought, in a fatality destined from all time; and they worked their way in tragedy to the end.

Mrs. O'Shea was at that time living in virtual separation from her husband. Parnell's subsequent judgment upon Captain O'Shea is to the point: 'I was right when I said in '80, as Willie got up on that platform at Ennis, dressed to kill, that he was just the man we did not want in the party'; and from the many indications shown throughout these books it is plain to see the causes that led his wife to desire a separate arena for herself. She lived at Eltham, near an aunt of hers; he lived in London; and they only met on the occasions when they dispensed hospitality together. That was the situation, as everybody knew, when Parnell came on to the scene. On the one hand there was no sympathy, and little desire for compromise; on the other hand there was an emotional understanding as significant as it was spontaneous, and as dangerous as both. It was something that came without searching; completely and fatally. Speaking of one of the occasions when they met (and it would seem they met at Captain O'Shea's wish, who was anxious to make his seat secure at the next General Election), she writes:

We had tea in the sitting-room, and he talked politics to me freely till I was interested and at ease,

and then lapsed into one of those long silences of his that I was already beginning to know were dangerous in the complete sympathy they evoked between us.

Moreover, he was ill, and she undertook to tend and nurse him. A situation such as this needs no elaboration. It is outside any attempt to impugn or defend. And, since character is destiny, the dominant factor was Parnell's temperament: passionate, unrelenting, unquestioning, and fatalistic. Moreover, the very political situation helped to enforce the destiny; for it prohibited any display of that great tenderness of his that necessarily, being part of the man, demanded an outlet, and which Mrs. O'Shea's solicitude for him provoked. Mrs. O'Shea declares that 'Once when he was moving restlessly, I heard him murmur in his sleep, as I pulled the light rug over him, "Steer carefully out of the harbour—there are breakers ahead" '; but, breakers or no, this much is sure, that he now had a place where he could be tended, and where he could lavish his tenderness, while he maintained his impassive hostility and watchfulness in the war for his country that was his only other world. He was a fatalist: the many and curious superstitions (if we may accept that term for the omens that justified themselves, so many of them, with such precision in his life) were only part of this; and it is certainly with a haunting sense of fatality that we

notice how each of his two worlds helped, caused, and was complementary to, the other. It is an interesting, if an idle, speculation to consider what his public life would have been had he not found a wholly separate outlet for that great tenderness of his nature.

The political situation imposed secrecy; and we find letters written in cypher, from false addresses, and later on, when Parnell was lodged in Kilmainham, in invisible ink. 'For good or for ill, I am your husband, your lover, your children, your all. And I will give my life for Ireland, but to you I will give my love, whether it be your heaven or your hell. It is destiny. When I first looked into your eyes I knew.'

Thus Mrs. Parnell records Parnell's words. But because of the life that was given to Ireland the love had to be defended from knowledge, however irksome such secrecy might have been. As we have seen, the knowledge soon became the property of those who moved in political circles; and Mrs. O'Shea became the recognised court of appeal whenever Parnell could not be found. When Captain O'Shea discovered it, we cannot say. Rumours having reached him, he went down to Eltham unexpectedly one day, and found Parnell's portmanteau in his room. This was in July 1881, within a year of Parnell's first meeting with Mrs. O'Shea. A duel nearly ensued, but was prevented by Parnell's imperturbable diplomacy.

We are told in these volumes that Captain O'Shea 'then, as always, was content that what was his, was *his* for good or ill'; and certainly he appears throughout as a man quite sufficiently sick of self-love. But, coming upon these very early suspicions, there could surely be no doubt in his mind after the famous Galway Election. There the fact was stated plainly, by Biggar and others, and must have come to his hearing. However egregious he might have been, could he have been so egregious as to believe that Parnell, the rigid party disciplinarian, was risking his whole leadership in thrusting a man who would not take the party pledge down the throats of the Galway electors simply because he was a sort of go-between in the making of the Kilmainham Treaty; and this, moreover, with the state of affairs stated openly enough and brutally enough at the hustings against himself in the election he was contesting? It seems difficult to believe. At least the mere mention of an ulterior cause in his forced nomination would, we conceive, have been sufficient to make him pause. Yet, if he did not know then, he knew soon after: he knew by May, 1886; *that is to say, three years before he thought of instituting proceedings*. In a letter to Cardinal Manning, November 27th, 1889, he says, 'There has been no delay on my part'; but there is an excerpt from his diary of October of that year in which he states that Cardinal Manning, in a personal interview, 'asked whether I had proof of

actual infidelity.' He adds 'He read a paper on which I had transcribed copies of *Pall Mall* paragraph, May 14th, 1886; he expressed great sympathy and much grief.' The Galway Election was in February, 1886. The seat so won at Galway, however, was not resigned.

A whole chapter, indeed, of these two volumes is given to "Captain O'Shea's letters"; and it raises many questions on which we could wish more explicit knowledge than we receive. It is plain that the closing months of 1885, with the General Election pending, were occupied with a good deal of intrigue. This intrigue is of the utmost historical importance, and is certain to engage attention in the future. Hints of it have been abroad for some time, from those who have had access to documents of that critical moment. Now, however, for the first time, the framework of that intrigue (or, at least, of a part of that intrigue) can be seen quite clearly in the implications of Captain O'Shea's letters. Unfortunately, in these pages, other names are involved, more by implication than by statement, and it certainly seems due to their memory that we should possess the fullest and most detailed knowledge of the transactions Captain O'Shea hints at.

Briefly the position was this. With the General Election pending, Chamberlain was bidding keenly for power in, if not indeed for the actual leadership of, the Liberal Party. He was animated not only

by his lust for power, but also by personal anger against Gladstone, who, apparently, had treated him with social contempt. That formed the basis of the intrigue, which began soon to circle about Parnell. Both Gladstone, as leader of the Liberals, and the Tories, through Lord Carnarvon, were in negotiation with Parnell for his support; for it seemed clear that the moment for which Parnell had manoeuvred had now arrived, when he would be dictator as between English parties. But Chamberlain had also his scheme for Ireland: an expanded Local Government scheme, comprising a system of County Councils under a Central Board. This offered, however, a great deal less than Gladstone and Carnarvon, the other bidders in the field, were willing to give. How, then, was Chamberlain to capture Parnell, who was notoriously a hard bargainer, and whose indifference to the English social and political machine had made him a difficult person to ensnare?

It is at this point that Captain O'Shea enters the field; and his letters reveal the part he played. In order to understand them it is necessary to remember that they are addressed to the lady through whom Parnell had already conducted certain critical political negotiations. For Captain O'Shea appears as Chamberlain's envoy extraordinary (extraordinary in every sense of the word) in the matter; and we are told that he had been offered the Chief Secretaryship of Ireland if his part of the intrigue were successful. "The

reason," he writes, "I am anxious about the Local Government scheme is that if Chamberlain has power, which I think he will, in the next Parliament, he will offer me the Chief Secretaryship, or the equivalent position, if the name is abolished, if the boys will let me have it." Clearly it is essential that Gladstone should be kept in the dark as to the adroit manœuvre by which he was to be outflanked; therefore the words are added: "Gladstone ought not to know this." The plot, however, expands. The choice of Captain O'Shea as envoy extraordinary, with all that it implied of more than political craft, was evidently not judged sufficient to ensnare the strong man and lay low the proud. The net went wider yet; and others were declared to be implicated in the intrigue—with what cause will appear later. For Captain O'Shea writes: "The Cardinal (Manning) has power to assure Parnell and the Government of the full support of the Catholic Church in case of their taking up the Co. and Central Board Government Bill."

Parnell, however, stepped easily clear of the meshes. He listened attentively to Carnarvon; he listened equally attentively to Gladstone; and it is possible that he treated Captain O'Shea, and, through O'Shea, Chamberlain, with contempt. Therefore Captain O'Shea becomes petulant; and as he becomes petulant he becomes disingenuous; and as he becomes disingenuous the ugly pistol in his pocket protrudes its ugly snout. "I have just seen P." he writes,

“but he appears to funk making a treaty. It is too bad, as it is a great chance, especially as it would allow of my being Chief Secretary in the next Parliament.” He conceives Parnell’s indifference to his personal advancement to indicate some fundamental corruptness in the man’s nature; and he begins to threaten. He says: “No rational beings who have had dealings with Mr. Parnell would believe him on oath. We know that he has recently said that he is under no obligation or promise to me!!!!”

The notes of exclamation are his own; and they reveal the delicate nature of his ambassadorship, for he knew well that Parnell would see them. We may well ask, why should Captain O’Shea be chosen as the man to persuade Parnell of the advantages of a scheme that offered Ireland less than the plan Gladstone was considering, but which gave Chamberlain “power in the next Parliament”? And why should he be offered the Chief Secretaryship in the event of his succeeding in his persuasion? His qualifications were scarcely conspicuous; and he was known to be hated and distrusted by the Irish Party. English politics are not a pretty business; but seldom, surely, have they touched quite such a depth as this. For Parnell’s position as Mrs. O’Shea’s lover was well-known to politicians, and the relationship had already been used as a means of communication and negotiation. Moreover, Parnell blocked the road before all parties; and by his skilful generalship had decreed that no English busi-

ness should proceed while Ireland was neglected. So Captain O'Shea was used, with the implication of a pistol to level at his head, and the promise of the Chief Secretaryship if he succeeded in threatening Parnell to betray Ireland by saving himself.

Such is the story that these letters reveal. Parnell, however, it is clear, treated the implied threat, the veiled blackmail, with contempt. He closed with Gladstone, but in the meantime averted the immediate peril by supporting O'Shea's candidature for Galway City. But, the Pigott plot having failed despite the skill with which it was laid, in due course of time the pistol was fired in the shape of divorce proceedings; and when that happened Gladstone took advantage of the moment to break loose by simulating righteous heroics over a relationship that he had been quite content to use to his advantage when it suited his turn.

It only remains to deal with Cardinal Manning's place in the intrigue. Much later, when dealing with the pending divorce, Captain O'Shea reminds him of his "notable service" in an "affair of very great importance . . . in 1885"; and, in another letter, refers to the "transactions with reference to the Local Government scheme." The general nature of those "transactions" (we may thank Captain O'Shea for that word) is quite clear, but the Cardinal's part in them is another matter. It is certainly due to his honoured memory that we should be put in possession

of the fullest information; for these letters place him in an invidious position. We suggest (possibly with reason) that if his correspondence with Captain O'Shea and Chamberlain were published we might see the plot more clearly; and might even learn his judgment on the intrigue into which he found he had been inveigled.

FRANCIS THOMPSON.



THE heart of every poet's web of song there is a knot that must be untied before its pattern can be unriddled. Or, as one has said elsewhere, there is always some central room in a man's house of Art which, if we can reach, will make all the dwelling stand round us in order and in harmony, and with a manifest purpose—or at least show us where the purpose fails if it be lacking. In the case of Francis Thompson that knot is not hard to find. It accosts us at the very outset in the facts attending the publication of his books. Soon after his recovery as a fugitive in the labyrinths of modern civilization he entered upon a great period of song. The dreams he had dreamed when the hardest pang whereon he laid his mutinous head was indeed a Jacob's stone, burst into flower of song when the arches of Covent Garden were exchanged for the peace of Storrington. The sight of his rescuer's children and the gorgeous pomp with which the sun went down evening by evening on his soundless way, on the one hand and the other, in the peace of innocence and the peace of majesty, swept the strings of his spirit, and melodies came,

slowly at first, but swelling in volume as they increased in number. Yet it is not the first evocation of song that chiefly matters. Poetry attests its truth to life in that it is the continuing and maturing of purpose that give it its greater significance. Francis Thompson's first volume of *Poems* was published in 1893; and it was followed two years later by *Sister Songs*. Two years later saw the publication of *New Poems*; and with that, save for a spasmodic irruption of song, chiefly in poems penned for special occasions and of diminishing value, his output ceased. When he was asked thereafter if he proposed subsequently to publish a further volume he would answer that he had concluded all he had to say. So resolute a refusal to continue a song the inspiration of which had dried fitted well with the mental discipline that became his philosophy. Some of his later poems, deriving a little from alien manners, show that it was wise also. Yet a decay so soon, succeeding to so sudden and splendid a flower, is not easy to understand; and, indeed, there are not a few poems in his last volume where it is plain that Francis Thompson himself was baffled by it.

So he could declare that :

“ *All joys draw inward to their icy urns,
Tormented by constraining rime,
And there
With undelight and throe prepare*

*The bounteous efflux of the vernal time.
Nor less beneath compulsive law
Rebukèd draw
The numbèd musics back upon my heart."*

Though he bravely continued :

*" Whose yet triumphant course I know
And prevalent pulses forth shall start,
Like cataracts that with thunderous hoofs charge
the disbanding snow,"*

yet we know that the musics remained numb upon his heart, that the constraining rime, however caused, was not thereafter to be broken. There are facts in his life that would seem to indicate some of his personal habits as the cause of this. We know, drug-taker though he was, and increasingly so in his later years, that none of his poems (save " Dream Tryst," in his first volume) were written while he was under the influence of laudanum. Did we not know it we might have inferred so much; for, from his own work, it is clear that Francis Thompson conceived more highly, more divinely of Poetry than to make it the sport of weightless fancies. He took its business greatly, as it should be taken. And his increasing addiction to the drug would seem to account for his failure of song, since it would bring repugnance as well as ineffectuality. But when one reaches so far

back one reaches a place where many occasions melt into one. One reaches, in short, a place where a human impulse has not yet differentiated itself into tendencies for which words can be provided. The influence of the drug induced a carelessness (at its gentlest expression) of personal appearance that cut him away from human society. His very garrulity to the few whom he knew was a pathetic banner in witness of that fact; and his gaiety in that company had, out of that company, to recoil upon himself. The distinguished poet who was the centre of that circle, who was also the recipient of the poem "Love in Dian's Lap," has herself declared that his presence there was a sufficient refutation of his reputed unhappiness. "No soul," says she, "oppressed by sadness is busy, as he was, with unnecessary words." Unnecessary words, unfortunately, are too often the token of unhappiness: of a yearning for company that one's own temperament frustrates. Bubbles on the face of water may be effervescence; they may also be a tragic symbol. And the results of this would echo in his song until it made the very habit of song difficult to maintain. The poet who could so tragically say:

*"It seemeth me too much
I do rehearse for such
A mean
And single scene.*

*Life is a coquetry
Of Death, which wearies me,
Too sure
Of the amour'';*

who could declare, "For who says, 'Lo, how sweet!' has first said, 'Lo, how sad!'" has found a gesture of sorrow too native to his soul for its continued building of such song as he would desire.

Yet the order may be inverted; and with equal justice. Even as his personal habits may have tended to constrict his song, so in the very song itself he may reveal the causes that, springing from the temperamental habit of his mind, led him back to the false solace of laudanum. In that case his song would unravel itself to us by revealing the heart of its builder and maker. For of all poets Francis Thompson seemed compelled to expound himself even while he assumed the exposition of other things. It was so in all that he did. When he was set to the task of praising Cecil Rhodes he celebrated himself; and Rhodes only in the degree in which he was like himself. His famous prose essay on Shelley takes its value from the same cause. Strictly considered, it is not criticism, nor is it exposition. Where, for example, he says that Shelley made the universe his box of toys, one scarcely needs to be reminded that this in no way describes the man who made his life a burning quest

for reality; though it fitly denotes an important trait in Francis Thompson himself. So when he was asked to write a poem on Cardinal Manning, it was not "To the Dead Cardinal of Westminster" that he sang, but of his own tempest-riven spirit.

*"Lies one I saw on earth;
One stricken from his birth
With curse
Of destinate verse.*

*What place doth He ye serve
For such sad spirit reserve,—
Given,
In dark lieu of Heaven,*

*The impitiable Daemon,
Beauty, to adore and dream on,
To be perpetually
Hers, but she never his?"*

The stanza form he chose finely lends itself to the expression of his withering irony, that is yet not so wholly irony as it is also a tragic despair; but it is scarcely in such incisive forms that the great dead will be praised.

Yet each instance given is illuminating; and they all lend each other their light. Shelley, for example.

never made the universe his box of toys, because Shelley would never have called Beauty "the impitiable Daemon," would never have imagined himself stricken with curse of destinate verse. The whole of Shelley's life was a quest he had to satisfy: Francis Thompson's life, on the other hand, was puzzled by an antinomy he always sought to resolve. In one form or another it is present in all his song, giving in its peculiar plangency, and creating at once its strength and its weakness. In the high things of Love, before the face of Nature, and in all the commerce of men in this strange business of mortality, it is always assailing him. Man, for him, was

*"a swinging wicket set
Between
The Unseen and Seen";*

and while the Seen was always haunting him with its appeal (as in his function as a poet it must needs have done), his body was not strong enough to possess it and to pass it through to the Unseen of which it stood as a flaming symbol, a shining portal; so he turned aside from it to enter otherwise to the Unseen, even while its appeal yet remained before his eye.

In his first volume this is already evident. There, at the outset of the series "Love in Dian's Lap" he creates for his delight the visual satisfaction that he needs.

*“ As lovers, banished from their lady’s face,
And hopeless of her grace,
Fashion a ghostly sweetness in its place,
Fondly adore
Some stealth-won cast attire she wore,
A kerchief, or a glove;
And at the lover’s beck
Into the glove there fleets the hand,
Or at impetuous command
Up from the kerchief floats the virgin neck.”*

So he finds his thoughts tending “ Before Her Portrait
in Youth.” Yet he concludes by crying his

*“ Curse on the brutish jargon we inherit,
Strong but to damn, not memorize a spirit!
A cheek, a lip, a limb, a bosom, they
Move with light ease in speech of working-day;
And women we do use to praise even so.”*

Thus to the

*“ Chaste and intelligential love
Whose form is as a grove
Hushed with the cooing of an unseen dove ”*

he enters : he bursts the gates, says he, in order to go
to the temple (though, to be accurate, he does not
enter by the gates at all), for

*"How praise the woman, who but know the spirit?
How praise the colour of her eyes, uncaught
While they were coloured with her varying thought?
How her mouth's shape, who only use to know
What tender shape her speech will fit them to?
Or her lips' redness, when their joinèd veil
Song's fervid hand has parted till it wore them
pale?"*

From the point of view of the answer to Life's riddle Poetry, at its highest, purports to give, it is evident that he has not resolved his antinomy: he has turned aside from it. The simple fact that high occupation with high things may mould and beautify the physical appearance is itself sufficient to show that the Seen may symbolize the Unseen, and is therefore not lightly to be spurned because of the "brutish jargon" inherited from a merely licentious muse. In turning to the things of the spirit Francis Thompson ranked himself as of the higher order of poets; and in the very glowing imagery in which he cast his conception, derived as it was from visible tokens of beauty, he found a better resolution than in the explicit idea which it contained. But it is evident that the idea itself, over-intellectual as it needs must be under the circumstances, was ordered for him, partly by the tragic disposition of his life, and partly by that which grew out of it, his unfamiliarity with the commerce of mankind. It was owing to this that,

needing the support of the Seen, needing, that is to say, its own proper, however inadequate, symbols, it was under the necessity of creating its own symbols. It reared itself on, it knit itself together by, a tissue of intellectual conceits that, in that attenuated air, that remote and not altogether real place, became frigid and deliberate—as in the closing paragraph of “Her Portrait.” It is but a scholiast’s labour, and profitless enough, to say whether or no these conceits have a literary derivation dating from the seventeenth century. It is true that Francis Thompson knew that literature well. It is also true that like subjects suggest like manners. But it is more to the point to see how he faced his own poetic problem, however he may or may not have not remembered the speech of others.

Face to face with Earth, or the visible glory of the heavens, his problem is the same, though it takes another shape. When one recalls how much Nature meant to him during the days at Storrington, how she calmed and cleansed him there, and how his “Ode to the Setting Sun,” his “Corymbus for Autumn,” and indeed most of his poems at that time, were steeped in that report, it is not easy to imagine the change of mind that must have occurred when he penned the following lines :

*“Lo, here stand I, and Nature, gaze to gaze,
And I the greater. Couch thou at my feet,*

*Barren of heart and beautiful of ways,
Strong to weak purpose, fair and brute-brained
beast.*

*I am not of thy fools
Who goddess thee with impious flatteries sweet,
Stolen from little Schools
Which cheeped when that great mouth of Rydal
ceased.*

*A little suffer that I try
What thou art, Child, and what am I—
Thy younger, forward brother, subtle and small,
As thou art gross and of thy person great withal."*

It is interesting to note that throughout this poem, of "Nature : Laud and Plaint," the decline of fervour means the banishment of inspiration : it points the way to the silence about to ensue. In the first of the poems in which he won to the larger spaces of his song, in the "Ode to the Setting Sun," the fervour is such that it overburdens his utterance with its excitement; and it is here, noteworthily, that he cries, even with the sacerdotal emblem beside him,

*"Yet in this field where the Cross planted reigns,
I know not what strange passions bows my head
To thee, whose great command upon my veins
Proves thee a god for me not dead, not dead!"*

It was because he could declare

*"Yet ere Olympus thou wast, and a god!
Though we deny thy nod,
We cannot spoil thee of thy divinity,"*

that he could tremble to the excitement of—

*"If with exultant tread
Thou foot the Eastern Sea
Or like a golden bee
Sting the West to angry red,
Thou dost image, thou dost follow
That King-maker of Creation,
Who, ere Hellas hailed Apollo,
Gave thee, angel-god, thy station;
Thou art of Him a type memorial."*

Sitting at the feet of doctrinaires, he forgot, in the end, that the Christ-word did not dismiss Paganism—it included it; that the Christ-word was not a denial, but an affirmation. But in the meantime the challenge of opposing laws was being called in his own mind. By the act of his will he had to put himself into relation with God; he had to make his choice, or wisely to guide the making of it; and in his song the issue reveals itself, at first by implication, but in the end explicitly. There can be but two ways in which this will may put itself into action: either by a greater or lesser degree of violence, or by the peaceful resolution that the "great mouth of Rydal" sang. Neither

has a monopoly of wisdom; for wisdom lies in a man's truth to the laws and reports of his own soul, not in his accepted obedience to a code. In Wordsworth's case (since Francis Thompson has himself cited Wordsworth) it is worthy of note that in the resolution he found he saw everywhere, in imperative brightness, "the Light that never was on sea or land," while yet never losing sight of the more familiar aspect of Earth, or of man when faithful to Earth. The value of the latter arose, indeed, by reason of the intense reality of the former, of which they were a partial appearance and a symbol. And with Francis Thompson the shining symbols of things-seen cried loudly through his senses to his spirit. None who has read *Sister Songs* can fail to note, even to bewilderment, how the trailing metaphors, drawn from the images of things seen, shift and pass and change over the face of the poem in token of the ineluctable things they imprison and typify. The very violence of some of the metaphors betokens the violence of the soul-thrift of the poet; the very vagrancy of some of them displays the pleasure of the writer, who rested, amid painful things, to make the universe his box of toys.

Some discipline had to come; whether it was the discipline of order, leading to solution, or the discipline of renunciation, leading to some form of asceticism. The glory and miracle of the seen world, momentarily displaying the invisible universe as it comes into sight and passes out of sight in flux and

reflux (like a globe whirling in darkness on only one tangent of which falls a bar of light), could not exclude his attention, however much it might excite him. The mind must pass on to its higher business, or rebate its achievement; and the first should hold promise of the last. But as Francis Thompson sang out his spiritual progress and discovery it is plain to see that he begins to take the way of renunciation and not that of solution. In the man himself this would make an interesting psychological study. There is no doubt that doctrinaire theology (embodying, in the first instance, the progress of other and probably wholly alien minds) was largely responsible for this. It housed him from the visible beauty that assailed and excited him, and which he could not in his body sustain, till in the agony of desire and denial cry after cry of pain was wrung from him.

*“O God! Thou knowest if this heart of flesh
Quivers like broken entrails, when the wheel
Rolleth some dog in middle street, or fresh
Fruit when ye tear it bleeding from the peel.”*

Each of his songs began now to echo to this cry of pain; and with each quivering of the heart of flesh his estate grew worse. Moreover, having taken the way of renunciation, it followed that each poem was a new submission to this Pain. So he declares :

*"I witness call the goddess, Pain,
Whose mirrored image trembles where it lies
In my confronting eyes,
If I have learned her high and solemn scroll:—
Have I neglected her high sacrifice,
Spared my heart's children to the sacred knife,
Or turned her customed footing from my soul?
Yea, thou pale Ashtaroth who rul'st my life,
Of all my offspring thou hast had the whole.
One after one they passed at thy desire
To sacrificial sword or sacrificial fire."*

To the lady of "Love in Dian's Lap" he had sung—

*"Teach how the sacrifice may be
Carven from the laurel tree."*

Now the mistress of his vision decrees a more poignant way:

*"Learn to dream when thou dost wake,
Learn to wake when thou dost sleep
Learn to water joy with tears,
Learn from fears to vanquish fears;
To hope for that thou dar'st not grieve;
Plow thou the rock until it bear;
Know, for thou else couldst not believe;
Lose that the lost thou may'st receive;
Die, for none other way canst live."*

He who was "Beauty's eremite"—he who called himself "Bird of the Sun! the Stars' wild honey-bee!"—he who beside the tree saw the elf that was its truer self, in the ordeal of pain is disciplining himself to a strange and stern path. The whole universe is, indeed, linked in an irrefragable unity—

*"That thou canst not stir a flower
Without troubling of a star";*

but the glory of the visible world is put by in order that the spirit may live as though in independence of it in the world of its own order. Instead of disciplining himself in the test of incarnation, he seeks to discipline himself out of incarnation and await the dissolution that shall bring him peace.

*"When this morass of tears, then drained and firm
Shall be a land—
Unshaken I affirm—
Where seven-quired psalterings meet;
And all the gods rove with calm hand in hand,
And eyes that know not trouble and the worm."*

And it is this consummation that he celebrates, by prophetic anticipation, in the superb close to that noblest of all his poems, the greatest and best-ordered, "An Anthem of Earth." If "The Hound of Heaven" (in valueless literary appraisal) be wilder in its appeal,

swifter and more various of tumult, at least the two poems have a significant relation each to the other. For the soul that fled all ways from the approaching footfall came to a stern halt while it awaited the death that both closes and opens Life, "for they are twain yet one, and Death is Birth."

How much it cost him to maintain so severe a renunciation its very austerity may suggest; and the more truly so as it was indeed an austerity of renunciation rather than the triumphant austerity of solution. Denials do not give the glad answers that just affirmations may offer. Heaven is not to be entered by skirting Earth, as the beauty blazoned over her spaces will testify. So Francis Thompson proved. He might, "By Reason of Thy Law," in a mien of fine dignity declare his "certitude of haughty fate," but there was also "The Dread of Height" to be feared.

*"Not the Circean wine
Most perilous is for pain:
Grapes of the heaven's star-loaden vine,
Whereto the lofty-placed
Thoughts of fair souls attain,
Tempt with a more retributive delight,
And do disrelish all life's sober taste.
'Tis to have drunk too well
The drink that is divine,
Maketh the kind earth waste,
And breath intolerable."*

Throughout the whole of this poem, full as it is of passages that claim quotation, it is strictly the dread of height that he sings, not the darkness that so strangely comes upon the soul after periods of wonderful illumination. Such a dread will seem a strange thing; yet it was justified thus far that he had not built himself up to that height, and so was not well assured of its attainment.

Yet that this is not all of truth "New Year's Chimes" and "In No Strange Land" (now entitled by Mr. Meynell "The Kingdom of God") are sufficient to show. In one place he declares of his song that

*"Within her eyes' profound arcade
Resides the glory of her dreams;
Behind her secret cloud of hair,
She sees the Is beyond the Seems";*

but in these two poems he sees the Is through and by means of the Seems, and that is a sight that brings its own faith with it. It may not be given to all to see "shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross," for all may not approve Charing Cross as in itself a place where bushes are wont to burn—though human hearts may burn there truly enough, independently of their environment. But the vision that abides steadfast is the vision of—

*“One to set, and many to sing,
(And a million songs are as songs of one),
One to stand and many to cling
The many things and the one Thing,
The one that runs not, the many that run.*

.

*“And the more ample years unfold
(With a million songs as song of one),
A little new of the ever old,
A little told of the never told,
Added act of the never done.*

*“Loud the descant, and low the theme,
(A million songs as song of one),
And the dream of the world is dream in dream,
And the one Is is, or nought could seem;
And the song runs round to the song begun.”*

There is no renunciation in that song; it is pure solution, wherein symbols and reality merge, and faith is justified of its vision, for the Seen takes its just value in a world of tuition as well as of intuition. Its simplicity of speech, too, is in significant contrast with the troubled tumult of much of his song. Yet all his song marks the way he went; and its Gothic splendour, typifying his spiritual adventure, has a high place in that Poetry that is also Prophecy.

THE LETTERS OF GEORGE MEREDITH.



REAT letter-writers are not habitually great writers apart from their letters, unless it happen that their other writing be largely couched in an epistolary or personal form, as with Lamb or Cowper. The reason is not very far to seek. The great writer, in the degree of his creation, is building an Art that shall be removed from the interposition of Time. It may grow and thrive, well or ill; it may even seem to turn from its first bent, as it is bound to derive its sustenance from the outer world of circumstance and occasion; but its growth and thrift is that of a structure complete in itself, in the end, in the measure of its success, to turn about and defy the challenge of Time. But the born letter-writer is one whose gaze is turned quite in the opposite direction. He watches the diurnal flow, takes keen delight in the ebb and flood, is absorbed in its apparent changes, and the petty toll borne past on the face of its waters. It is his very lack of preoccupation that gives the true letter-writer his charm.

Yet among those who are creators, not letter-writers, there is a considerable degree of difference in

their correspondence. Keats, under the exacting discipline of his verse, had to deliver in his letters his conception of his art, even as, later, Flaubert was to elaborate in his *Correspondance* the principles that eliminated their own declaration in his novels. But with Meredith the case was different. His art was more hospitable to strangers. "All I have to say goes into books," he says, in a letter to Mrs. Janet Ross. At the time he wrote that he was at work upon *Emilia in England* (since altered to *Sandra Belloni*); and one need not read far into that book to discover why his letters should be so bare, in the main, of those comments on life and art that provide so acute an interest in the correspondence of some artists.

Yet this shutting aside of other interests gives the sequence of Meredith's letters an extraordinary value when set beside the course of the novels. In its bare, almost nude, occupation with the strict business called up by the wayward necessity of correspondence a commentary is provided that is the more valuable because it has to be discovered. It is rather the exception than the rule to find any mention of the novel he is at work upon; indeed, save in the early days, there is no explicit reference to the work he has laid aside for the writing of his correspondence. It is even necessary to have dates in memory in order to discover the precise moment in what one might justifiably call his more permanent life. Yet when this

has been done, when one has been laid beside the other, end to end, a rich and extraordinary human interest emerges from the juxtaposition. As has been said, the very fact that the commentary thus provided should be so unpremeditated, in the natural course of things, makes it the happier when it is seen.

In the larger course of his life and his life's work it is so not less than in the closer application. For example, it is obvious to every reader of the novels that up to the time of the writing of *Harry Richmond* and *Beauchamp's Career* Meredith had in mind the larger audience of intelligent readers, however slight may have been his fortune in capturing their hearing. In the three novels that followed—*The Egoist*, *Diana of the Crossways*, and *One of Our Conquerors*—it is as clear that he addressed himself particularly to the smaller circle whose hearing he had won and on which he could to a measure rely; even as, in the closing two novels, it is possible to see a wider audience again introduced to the scope of the appeal and a gentler, less exacting, less eagerly brilliant spirit pervade their inception and execution.

Readers unfamiliar with the novels might have learned so much from the letters. Here it is even tragic. To read them steadfastly through is to fear at times for the writer, then to grieve for him; grieve the more keenly since his talking of the blow, though touched with bitterness, is so stoical—even to a righteous sense of indignation against all the tribe of

short-sighted reviewers, secure in their little uncreative fastnesses. As novel succeeds to novel, in the slight hints he makes concerning their presentation, it is even painful, in view of the event, to see his eager, ardent soul throwing itself into the prospect of at last laying by the heels the elusive Puck of popularity.

The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, his first novel, had been banned by the libraries as an immoral book; which, in the days of the three-decker, was death to any novel. Writing to the Rev. Augustus Jessopp, who speaks of bringing his wife to visit Meredith at Copsham, he asks: "Does she know that my literary reputation is tabooed as worse than libertine in certain virtuous societies, that there have been meetings to banish me from book clubs?" *Emilia in England* followed in due course on the stocks; and went all awry in the workmanship. He himself plainly recognizes this: and indeed it must be apparent to any reader. It appears in a letter to Sir William Hardman that this was due to "altering my original conception of the scheme"; and he declares in consequence to Mrs. Jessopp: "Of Emilia I cannot speak. She grieves me. I have never so cut about a created thing. There's good work in her; but the work? That note of interrogation is in person."

What chanced with *Evan Harrington* it is not possible to say. It was published at his own charges; and though the publisher later declared that it won him "a fairly large sum of money," the letters at this

moment give no hint that any success has come his way. Yet his eye looks eagerly forward. He declares again to the Rev. Augustus Jessopp: "I shall be a *millionaire* next year. My plain story (*Rhoda Fleming*) is first to right me, and then the three-volumer (*Vittoria*) will play trumpets." The "plain story," strangely enough, never seems to have won his esteem to the end. It is not less curious to discover that it should have failed to win esteem with the reading public. *Vittoria* appeared first serially in the pages of the *Fortnightly Review*; but in the book form it was as unproductive of the larger fame he coveted as its hapless predecessors.

Yet, still he looks to the future to save the past. It is true he writes to John Morley: "As for *Harry Richmond*, I fear I am evolving his personality too closely for the public; but a man must work by the light of his conscience if he's to do anything worth reading." Nevertheless, he is full of hope. His words are plainly a safeguard against excess of hope, for on hearing that William Hardman likes the tale as it appears serially and anonymously in the *Cornhill*, he declares: "So you do both care for *Richmond*. I hoped it. . . . I shall have another to follow when *Richmond* ceases, and so by drumming may make the public hear me at last." This other is *Beauchamp's Career*, wherein he tells Captain Maxse: "You may look and see, My dear Fred and his loving friend George Meredith."

These again went the way of the others. Nothing, it seemed, could win him the approbation he craved. The goal he sought seemed as remote as ever. For seventeen years since the publication of *Richard Feverel* (twenty-five years since the first volume of poems) he had drummed at the public ear, while the public had given but scant heed; and a change comes over the letters, slowly, like a film of cloud stealthily shutting out the brightness of the day.

Nothing, it would seem, could daunt the clean courage of Meredith or turn the stoic temper of his mind. Always he faced forward fearlessly, bravely. But courage in the affairs of men is not always one with a high and eager spirit. With Meredith it was not so after this repeated baulking of his hopes. Constant work and continued disappointment have their way so terribly with him that it is even hard to read his letters at this time by reason of the utter weariness that they speak. Later, in the year of his death, we find him writing, "These reviewers do not reflect on their chances of wounding"; and there is the tang of retrospect in his phrase. But now he writes to his son Arthur on the Continent :

"Whether I can come to you hangs doubtful. I am half bound to work for the *Cornhill*; and as I am unpopular I am ill paid, and therefore bound to work double tides, hardly ever able to lay down the pen. This affects my weakened stomach, and so the round of the vicious circle is looped. I will come—be sure, if I find it prudently possible. . . .

Yet I could not enjoy it under pressure of work to finish or a holiday stolen; I have lost my old buoyancy."

Later he writes to Admiral (sometime Captain) Maxse, saying: "For me I would not have my life again—under the conditions." "Consciousness," he adds, "excites human felicity to kill it. Past consciousness there may be a felicity eternal. These are not words; they are my excruciated thoughts—out of bloody sweat of mind, and now peaceful, imaging life, accepting whatever is there."

It is not easy to conceive of a possible eternal felicity apart from consciousness; but one can well imagine how the paradoxical conception had captured the mind of a man whose very excess of consciousness in the past had been the instrument of his excruciation. It is during these years he turns about and writes entirely to please himself: no more seeking to woo the world, he erects his own peculiar world of Art, full of aerial delicate laughs, dialogues that dart through the air like swiftly jewelled arrows and wanderings in labyrinths of difficult and unexplored psychology. His house of Art is to be his own pleasure, wherein the intellectual athlete shall disport himself, seeing the mass of readers will not share its hospitality. And now it is that Fortune casts her capricious transformation over the history. Out of this final defiance of his emerges that larger recognition of his work that he had coveted so long, that had

been so persistently withheld from him. So much so, indeed, that, as it wears on apace, he is induced to take up and conclude a novel that had lain aside for some years. *The Amazing Marriage*, as a letter to Robert Louis Stevenson makes clear, was begun immediately after *The Egoist*, but was not continued. It is not difficult to see what caused the continuance. He never, indeed, forgets his treatment at the hands of reviewers; he never, in his later years, sent out his volumes of poetry for review, leaving the querulous tribe to make merry, if they would, with his novels only; the very characteristics of Carinthia Jane in *The Amazing Marriage* stand for his conviction that there is a country where the sword of the irrevocable forbids the entry of forgiveness. Nevertheless, a change occurs. His letters soften and become more gracious; his sometime exultancy and buoyancy, it is true, are gone, but more than the reflection of them may be seen in the gentler and more chastened stoicism that takes its place; and the rigidity of his antagonism is relaxed, a more tender outlook supervening.

Two friendships, in his letters, stand for signs of these two moods in him: the early mood of exuberance and hope, and the later mood of philosophic resolution. William Hardman he met when they were both living at Esher; and in Blackburn Tuckham of *Beauchamp's Career* he recorded his portrait of him. "Mr. Tuckham had a round head, square,

flat forehead, and ruddy face; he stood as if his feet claimed the earth under them for his own, with a certain stoutness of leg that detracted from the majesty of his resemblance to our eighth Harry, but increased his air of solidity; and he was authoritative in speaking." Sir William Hardman has already recorded his early reminiscences of Meredith; and the irresistible gaiety of these letters to "Tuck" (as he dubbed him, receiving the sobriquet of "Robin" in return) confirms and even revivifies that enlivening picture. Snatches of song are trolled out with whatever caprice of the moment; laughter bubbles up through the words; the irresponsible gaiety that characterized their walks through Surrey and Hampshire, swinging madrigals along the lanes and chaffing each other continually, breaks out into every line of these early letters. "Do we quarrel?" he asks in one of them. "If so, I send love to somebody and snap my fingers at you. If not, my regards of the warmest to both."

To see so spontaneous a mood passing from the letters, to see the exuberance and high-spirited gaiety crushed into a more ordered steadfastness, is to have strangely recalled to one his own stern and stoic phrase with regard to the change that was wrought in his Emilia: "It is a quality going and a quality coming." One of the most curious things in Meredith's life was the way in which it was required of him that he should stand the challenge of his own philosophy as outlined

in such early works as *The Shaving of Shagpat* and *Sandra Belloni*. The new series of letters that now begin to John Morley mark the passing of spontaneity and the coming of an enriched philosophy that has some strange correspondences with the spiritual evolution of Emilia, lacking though it be in the central fitness.

The friendship was a rare one: intimate, yet never quite familiar, based on identity of issue and mutual admiration rather than on the more spontaneous promptings of the blood, with the result that the letters rely not only on the warmer interchange for the matter mentioned in them, the roll of the world's affairs being touched upon incidentally with a vivid and incisive pen. They yet display a rich strength of affection that is infinitely touching in its tale of a manly interchange of love.

It is to John Morley he delivers his opinion of Tennyson's "Arthurian Cycles":

"He is a real singer; and he sings this mild fluency to this great length. Malory's *Morte Arthure* is preferable. Fancy one affecting the great poet and giving himself up (in our days!—he must have lost the key of them) to such dandiacal fluting. . . . I read the successive lines with pain—yards of linen—drapery for the delight of ladies who would be in the fashion. . . . The praises of the book shut me away from my fellows."

It is to John Morley he says of Mark Pattison: "Pattison on 'Books' is perfectly correct. As with

India, irrigation would improve his produce." He tells him: "I have read your *Robespierre*. It sent me to Carlyle. He bears re-reading. Still, that kind of thing will not do. It is our only history of the French Revolution, and is in as much disorder as the Paris of Danton." And, indeed, the letters to him are full of such incidental and incisive touches that make us crave for the other half of them. For this friendship, coming at full maturity, flowed to the end. It was John Morley, as editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, who printed the serial issue of many of Meredith's novels, such as *Vittoria*, *Beauchamp's Career*, and *The Tragic Comedians*, whereas *Diana of the Crossways* and *One of Our Conquerors* were subsequently first published in that *Review* as a consequence of that partnership. It was to the credit of his discernment and courage that he did so. At the end of his days we find Meredith writing to him, when Mr. Arthur Balfour had proposed him for the Order of Merit:

"When the communication came I had vision of an enormous misty mountain that had been in some odd way benevolent to me, and I was mystified until I detected the presence of an active mouse, assuring me of a living agency in the strange matter—anything but a ridiculous birth. For evidently it had fretted at the ear of the Premier and caused A. B. to cast eye on a small a. b., long a workman in letters. Was I not right? I wished for no distinction. A title would have sunk me. But I could not be churlish in this case. Besides, I am to be ranked with and near you."

Yet among all the letters—letters to friends and letters to strangers, letters of early buoyancy, letters of later bitterness, and letters that breathe a rich harvest at the evening of the day, letters that are redolent of his fragrant intimacy with the varying face of Mother Earth, and letters that deal with household affairs—the only name that continues from the very earliest almost to the close is that of Admiral Maxse. It is in its way a wonderful correspondence. We have now, in a letter already quoted, Meredith's own explicit authority for finding "my dear Fred and his loving friend George Meredith" in *Beauchamp's Career*—Nevil Beauchamp being, as is well known, Captain Maxse, and Dr. Shrapnel (who is therefore framed in caricature) his own creator. To recall the letters written by Dr. Shrapnel to Nevil Beauchamp is to discover more energetic paraphrases of some of the letters in this collection. It is, for example, Dr. Shrapnel who writes to Nevil Beauchamp :

"Take this, my Beauchamp, for the good in prayer, that it makes us repose on the unknown with confidence, makes us flexible to change, makes us ready for revolution—for life, then! He who has the fountain of prayer in him will not complain of hazards. Prayer is the recognition of laws, the soul's exercise and source of strength, its thread of conjunction with them. Prayer for an object is the cajolery of an idol, the source of superstition."

It is George Meredith who writes to Captain Maxse, speaking of prayer :

"It is good for men. It is at once an acknowledgment of some higher power; it rouses up and cleanses the nature, and searches us through to find what we are. Only the praying for gifts and thanking for gifts is really damnable. It's treating the Lord as an old uncle."

The identity, in fact, is even closer than a superficial similarity of words would suggest. Dr. Shrapnel, one remembers, was a kind of spiritual, social, and physical mentor to Beauchamp; and in his letters Meredith is repeatedly taking this office for Captain Maxse. "Don't forget," he says to him, "that mental arrogance is as a fiery wine to the spirit—a little of it gives a proper pride; but you carry too much." Frequently he rebukes him; oftener he encourages him. His political predilections are taken to task; and even the problems of hygiene and of desirable and undesirable foodstuffs are examined in detail. One of the results of this is that as Meredith grows through the somewhat severe discipline that life had set for him it is possible to discover the growth, the evolution rather than the change, in his opinions. Even as the great buoyancy passes into a stoic discipline and resolution, so the earlier zest for all of life passes into a discrimination of its uneven values. The large praiser of wine—port in *Evan Harrington* and *The Egoist*, sherry in *Rhoda Fleming*, claret in *Harry Richmond*, champagne in *One of Our Conquerors*, the vintage of the Rhine Valley in *The Tragic Comedians*—comes to say: "I do not abjure

wine when it is old and of good vintage. I take it rarely. . . . Stimulants may refresh and may even temporarily comfort the body after labour of brain; they do not help it—not even in the lighter kinds of labour. They unseat the judgment, pervert vision.” This, to be true, was to a correspondent other than Captain Maxse, yet in the letters to him, in the discipline of diet that he outlines for him, may be seen the stem and bough of which this is the leaf.

The study of Meredith’s philosophy and its growth is its own separate study; yet in these letters to Captain Maxse the change in the man is seen that created the philosophic growth, since a man’s philosophy is ever his attempt satisfactorily to account for his presence in the world. Philosophies are always, in their degree, mechanical; yet here it is possible to lay the finger on “the human pulse of the machine.” Indeed, it becomes possible the better to interpret the machine, for there are certain reservations, hints even, and intimations in the stoic creed he wrought for himself, unnecessarily neglected where they lie scattered through his work. If the neglect he suffered caused him to spin a somewhat stern garment for himself where he went his unacknowledged way, and so to shut himself from the gentler solace that enlightens the minds of men, he was yet not so immune from their quick hopes as it might appear. In the agnostic age in which he lived it was not so easy for him to give their just value to these intimations

that haunted his mind acutely at some moments, and from which he was never quite free even when he denied himself the solace they proffered. Yet there they were; and it is characteristic of his later correspondence that, while it is always present as an animating spirit in his letters to Captain Maxse, it only takes explicit form in the letters to John Morley. It is to John Morley, for example, that he writes the following wonderful letter :

" I tossed off a letter to St. B. to end the year '77. I greet you in the first hour of the New One, after a look at the stars from my chalet door, and listening to the bells. We have just marked one of our full stops, at which Time, turning back as he goes, looks with his old gentleman smile. To come from a gaze at the stars—Orion and shaking Sirius below him—is to catch a glance at the inscrutable face of him that hurries us on, as on a wheel from dust to dust. I thought of you and how it might be with you this year : hoped for good : saw beyond good and evil to great stillness, another form of moving for you and me. It seems to me that Spirit is—how, where, and by what means involving us, none can say. But in this life there is no life save in spirit. The rest of life, and we may know it in love, is an aching and a rotting."

Possibly it was this very night's reflection that prompted the poem "Meditation under Stars"; where, one remembers, night having passed, he comes to Earth with his mind full of hints of the eternal majesty the stars convey, and

*“Then at new flood of customary morn,
Look at her through her showers,
Her mists, her streaming gold,
A wonder edges the familiar face:
She wears no more that robe of printed hours;
Half strange seems Earth, and sweeter than her
flowers.”*

“Sweeter than her flowers”! Yet this was he who once sang:

*“Into the breast that gives the rose,
Shall I with shuddering fall?”*

It is even so in that great hour of trial when he knew that his richly happy second marriage was to know the term sternly set by death. Even here it is true that “all he has to say goes into books.” When the blow fell on him he found his solace in erecting that stately though chastening temple of fortitude and stoic comfort, “A Faith on Trial.” Here he turns to Earth for comfort and learns that

*“Harsh wisdom gives Earth, no more;
In one the spur and the curb:
An answer to thoughts and deeds;
To the Legends an alien look;
To the Questions a figure of clay.”*

"Smite, Sacred Reality!" he cries; and will take no solace from hopes for, instincts of, a richer being beyond the clay. Indeed, he declares roundly to Mr. Herbert Trench that "the good ship Immortality methinks has served her turn." Nevertheless, in the last days of his wife's illness, he writes to John Morley: "Happily for me, I have learnt to live much in the spirit and see brightness on the other side of life, otherwise this running of my poor doe with the inextricable arrow in her flanks would pull me down too." To his son, after her death, he says: "I do not doubt that you think of your dear mother. Think of her as alive in the spirit. She is with you in your worthiest thoughts—and the nobler they are the more you may be sure of that." And so again to John Morley: "Death is death, as you say, but I get to her by consulting her thoughts and wishes—and so she lives in me. This, if one has the strength of soul, brings a spirit to us."

In a letter to G. P. Baker (now Professor of English in Harvard University) he declared: "When . . . you say that a certain change in public taste, should it come about, will be to some extent due to me you hand me the flowering wreath I covet." The novel, he adds, he wished to use to this end, though he wisely adds that he "never started on a novel to pursue the theory it developed." It is the irony of events that the neglect dealt out to his earlier novels should largely have induced the stern, somewhat

severe, indisputably stoic spirit that actuates his later work in verse and prose. It is a spirit that, when not almost repellent, as in *Carinthia Jane*, seems rather to be exclusive than inclusive, ascetic rather than generous, as in *Matthew Weyburn*. Such were the cloak wherewith he clothed himself rather than the urgent, desiring man within the cloak, as these letters reveal him to be. Therefore they come to cast a rich and glowing light over his works, helping us to interpret them as with a fuller significance, and even at times as being lit with a possible mystical beauty. By their aid our ears may be attuned to the discovery of a cord that shall be heard sounding with a sudden spiritual meaning in a music that seems to be prohibitive of the larger spiritual application.

It is tragic to think how much of this might have been unnecessary, how much these quicker inspirations might have found their place in his more deliberate philosophy, had it not been for the stoicism with which he guarded himself against the neglect of a bull-minded public. In a letter to Swinburne he writes: "I see the illustrious Hutton" (whose day of petty authority is now happily wrapped from memory) "of the *Spectator* laughs insanely at my futile efforts to produce an impression on his public." Later in the same letter there is a phrase poignant in its tragedy. "I am being carried away from the Singing," he cries. All through them, to one correspondent or another, this insistence on the value of

the Singing to him is enforced, accompanied though it usually is with a recognition of its futility in his material state of affairs. Early in his life he writes to Mrs. Janet Ross: "I have left *Emilia Belloni* untouched for months. . . . *En revanche*, I am busy on poems"; and later to her again, "I regret to say I can't give up writing poetry, which keeps your poet poor." Nor is he in any sense doubtful of the particular quality of some of his poems. "They are flints, perhaps, and not flowers," he tells the Rev. Augustus Jessopp. Their tendency was ever that way; which is to say that his tendency was ever that way, since a man's poetry is ever the reflex of his soul. But the rich waves might have come on them had their execution not always been in the interstices of a heavy pressure of work. And in such a case the Singing would have reflected his deeper aspirations instead of setting bounds to them by a praise of brain rule.

That is to say that in the letters, despite the fact that they are chiefly incidental by nature, one may approach nearer the breathing heart of Meredith than even in his work. We see him as a philosopher-artist, a little fearful of what is called the artistic temperament; a man as much in touch with the world as the earth. It is possible to catch him in the undress of his hopes and thoughts; and to see their more various tendencies before he has eliminated such part of them as could not find entry into the straighter

channel of his philosophy. Yet, above all, we are taken into some of the intimacies of a mind so rich, so full that one wonders where there is another mind. so rich, outside Shakespeare, in English literature.

"FOR DEMAND OF PEACE : OR ELSE NOT."

A Forgotten Document in Irish History.

I.



AMONG the many documents in which Irish history breaks suddenly into some strange and significant blossom—a blossom fed by the roots of the past, and holding the seeds from which new roots will branch in the future—there are two that have for some curious reason been altogether neglected. They stand at the parting of the ways, just before the moment when the old Gaelic State, scattered and dismembered as it was by causes beyond its control, finally disappeared from outward form to take refuge in the instincts and institutions of a nation. They mark the last effort of the State to affirm somehow its outward form; to ensure its visible life; and they mark it in the expression of one of the greatest statesmen and generals of the nation. Indeed, the political importance of these documents can hardly be exaggerated, coming from whom they do, expressing as they do so shrewd a political thought, and marking as they do in intellectual form, in con-

structive appeal, a national crisis the outward show and tragedy of which has been obvious for the most casual reader of history. All the more strange is it that such documents should have lain neglected, though they have been accessible for long in the Calendars of State Papers.* They have been set out there in full; and before going further it would be as well to give them here, and to discuss their relation one to another together with the circumstances under which they were probably written.

A.

Articles set out by Tyrone for demand of Peace, or else Not.

First, he demandeth to have the Catholic Church, and free liberty throughout the realm, and service said openly everywhere.

(2.) That all church livings shall be restored as appertaineth to the Catholic Church.

(3.) That there shall be no Lord Deputy of Ireland but one of the nobility of England, and of the Privy Council there.

(4.) That the Lord Chancellor of Ireland shall be a born man of this country.

(5.) That none of Her Majesty's officers of the

*Father Corcoran has quoted from one of them in his recent book *State Policy and Irish Education*; but he has naturally only given the clauses that illustrate the purpose of his book, not the political clauses.

Courts, as Master of the Rolls, Serjeant, Solicitor, Attorney, shall be appointed, but such as shall be Irishmen born.

(6.) Also, that Her Majesty may, upon her own charges, erect or build a college for the Catholics to teach their art in.

(7.) Also, that every band of soldiers that Her Majesty doth keep in Ireland shall be half or more Irishmen.

(8.) That none shall be pressed to be a soldier but by his own goodwill.

(9.) That there shall be no Governor appointed for the four Provinces but an Irishman born.

(10.) That all such as are in prison, either in England or Ireland, for the Catholic Faith, may be set at liberty.

(11.) Also, that those Catholic priests that say Mass in corners, and will not say it openly, shall be excommunicated.

(12.) Item, that if any man in England or Ireland be minded to go over sea for learning, that he shall be suffered to pass without any let or stay.

(13.) Also, that if any fatherless child being within age, that his living shall go to the next of his kin, till he come to full age himself.

(14.) Also, that all nations in Ireland shall enjoy their living as they did two hundred years ago.

(15.) Also, that it shall be lawful for any man to build a ship or bark to his ability.

(16.) Also, that any man that is out of the realm for religion may return safe home into England or Ireland.

(C.S.P.I., 1599—1600, pp. 280—1.)

B.

Articles intended to be stood upon by Tyrone.

(1.) That the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Religion be openly preached and taught throughout Ireland, as well in cities as borough towns, by bishops, seminary priests, Jesuits, and all other religious men.

(2.) That the Church of Ireland be wholly governed by the Pope.

(3.) That all cathedrals and parish churches, abbeys, and all other religious houses, with all tithes and church land, now in the hands of the English, be presently restored to the Catholic churchmen.

(4.) That all Irish priests and religious men, now prisoners in England or Ireland, be presently set at liberty, with all temporal Irishmen, that are troubled for their conscience, and to go where they will without further trouble.

(5.) That all Irish priests and religious men may freely pass and repass, by sea or land, to and from foreign countries.

(6.) That no Englishman may be a churchman in Ireland.

(7.) That there be erected an University upon the Crown rents of Ireland, wherein all sciences shall be taught according to the manner of the Roman Catholic Church.

(8.) That the Governor of Ireland be at least an Earl, and of the Privy Council of England, bearing the name of Viceroy.

(9.) That the Lord Chancellor, Lord Treasurer, Lord Admiral, the Council of State, the Justices of the Land, Queen's Attorney, Queen's Serjeant, and all other officers appertaining to the Council and law of Ireland, be Irishmen.

(10.) That all principal governments of Ireland, as Connaught, Munster, &c., be governed by Irish noblemen.

(11.) That the Master of Ordnance, and half the soldiers with their officers resident in Ireland, be Irishmen.

(12.) That no Irishmen's heirs shall lose their lands for the faults of their ancestors.

(13.) That no Irishman's heir under age shall fall in the Queen's or her successor's hands, as a ward, but that the living be put to the heir's profit, and the advancement of his younger brethren, and marriages of his sisters, if he have any.

(14.) That no children nor any other friend be taken as pledges for the good abearing of the parents, and, if there be any pledges now in the hands of the English, they must presently be released.

(15.) That all statutes made against the preferment of Irishmen, as well in their own country as abroad, be presently recalled.

(16.) That the Queen nor her successors may in no sort press an Irishman to serve against his will.

(17.) That O'Neill, O'Donnell, the Earl of Dromond, with all their partakers, may peaceably enjoy all lands and privileges that did appertain to their predecessors 200 years past.

(18.) That all Irishmen, of whatever quantity they be, may freely travel in foreign countries for their better experience, without making any of the Queen's officers acquainted withal.

(19.) That all Irishmen may as freely travel and traffic all merchandise in England as Englishmen, paying the same rights and tributes as the English do.

(20.) That all Irishmen may freely traffic with all merchandises, that shall be thought necessary by the Council of State of Ireland for the profit of their Republic, with foreigners or in foreign countries, and that no Irishman shall be troubled for the passage of priests or other religious men.

(21.) That all Irishmen that will may learn, and use all occupations and arts whatsowas.

[22.] That all Irishmen may freely build ships of what burden they will, furnishing the same with artillery and all munition at their pleasure.

II.

There is no hint on either document to suggest in what connection they have been written, except that they are both dated "1599, November." Nor, apparently, would the handwriting of the originals help greatly, inasmuch as both are calendared as "Drafts." There is, therefore, only such help as the wording of the two documents may afford, taken together with their date. Yet from these it is not very difficult to piece together the history that they contain; and to witness an issue which, though its event may never have been in doubt, had at that moment a striking significance.

It will be seen that the two documents have been transposed from the order in which they have been calendared. The reason for that appears on a little examination. To whomever Hugh O'Neill (with the English title of Earl of Tyrone which he was so reluctant to use) handed his Articles, it is clear he did not hand both these documents. Their terms do not in all points agree; their spirit differs; and it is hardly probable that a man would submit two documents in a parley where one would do. That is to say, O'Neill, or his secretary, Henry Harrington, wrote one of these; and the other was written by somebody else.

Put thus, it is clear which of these two documents came from O'Neill. The titles of the two "Articles"

give the first clue. The first clearly defines itself as “ Articles set out by Tyrone.” The other is much less explicit : “ Articles intended to be stood upon by Tyrone ” ; a title that suggests, though it is not in itself sufficient to decree, a secondary hand that wrote after the event, probably in amplification of a briefer document for official purposes. The wording of the two documents approves the clue suggested by their titles. In clause 4 of the first, for instance, the words “ a born man of this country ” are quite explicit in proving, not only that the writer wrote from Ireland, but also that he wrote from the point of view of an Irishman. Then again, the whole of clause 11 suggests some special local conditions that would not suggest themselves to a stranger ; and it is noteworthy that this alone of all the clauses in the first document is omitted altogether from the second, as though the writer of the second could make nothing of it, and thought it best to omit it altogether from his version.

Carried a stage further the clue completes itself. If O'Neill was submitting articles of peace for Elizabeth's acceptance, it is hardly likely that he would choose a form of words calculated to be peculiarly offensive to her. Even Shane O'Neill, “ Δν τοιοῦταρ,” did not let his pride so far run away with his address ; and Hugh O'Neill had won more victories in peace even than in war by the virtue of his grace and subtlety of his address. Not for nothing did Camden, the Elizabethan chronicler, speak of him as of a

"mind great, and able for the greatest businesses," and of a "mind most profound to dissemble." That is to say, the first two clauses of the first document are just what we would expect from his hand. Simply worded, phrased with address, they are just in what they demand, they are hard to gainsay so eminently reasonable are they, they are frank and candid, in essence as in appearance, and they do not flaunt their implications. In a word, they are the demand of a man who did not miss his stroke yet did not needlessly annoy his adversary. It is not at all likely that the man who phrased them would set out to amplify them into the clauses of the second document, every second line of which was calculated to make a very uncomfortable afternoon at Elizabeth's court that winter's day. This talk of anything in what she conceived of as her dominions being "wholly governed" by anybody but herself; this talk of tithes and lands "now in the hands of the English" passing from her right to dispose of and dispense; this talk of "priests and religious men" who "may freely pass and repass, by sea and land, to and from foreign countries," at a time when Elizabeth's bitterest anger had been stirred against O'Neill's clerical emissaries to Philip of Spain and the See of Rome; this talk of the building of armed ships:—all these things were not penned by a man who wished to effect a far-reaching settlement, but were clearly written by someone who wished that these Articles should annoy Elizabeth at every turn.

The hand that penned the judicious simplicity of the first did not pen the deliberate provocation of the second.

This change is noticeable in each of the clauses of the first as amplified in the second document. In one, however, there is a stroke of the pen, casually given, that is very suggestive. In clause 6 of the first document, the question of a Catholic college of learning is raised quite simply, rather by way of suggestion, and the request that this should be done at Elizabeth's "own charges" appears as no more than an appeal to her liberality. In clause 7 of the second document the talk of "Crown rents," though technically more accurate and a literal exposition of what the first implied, places the whole matter on a different plane altogether. And then the pen makes the stroke that betrays the hand. For it is certain that it was not a Catholic (nor for that matter an Irishman) who used the words "*Roman Catholic Church*," or wrote the whole phrase in which those words appear.

III.

If, then, O'Neill wrote the first of these two documents, who wrote the second? For that it is necessary to go back earlier, and to examine the circumstances in which O'Neill came to submit his Articles "for demand of peace or else not."

Those circumstances can be determined quite

accurately. Elizabeth's letters about this time indicate clearly by whose hand O'Neill's Articles were brought before her attention; and in the State Papers, Irish and Domestic, the circumstances can be pieced together without much difficulty. The only English functionaries who saw O'Neill during the autumn and winter of 1599 were Geoffrey Fenton, the Irish Secretary, who saw him once, early in December, and Sir William Warren, who saw him several times. Warren was a favourite both with the Earl of Essex and with O'Neill. At first he had been deputed to negotiate with O'Neill as Essex's envoy; and when Essex fell from power he continued in that capacity on behalf of the Lords Justices Loftus and Carey and the Earl of Ormond, the threads of negotiations being already in his hand. His only task in these negotiations was to procure renewal of the articles of cessation of war that O'Neill had signed with Essex on the 15th September. And that cessation, being for the periods of six weeks at a time, implied that O'Neill was constantly waiting for an answer to some terms that he had submitted to Essex, pending which hostilities had been suspended.

This meeting of Essex and O'Neill has often been described, and always clothed in mystery. Essex having been appointed with wide powers by Elizabeth (with wider powers than ever she intended him to use, as he was to discover) had come as Lord Lieutenant General of Ireland, generally to cure all

the ills Elizabeth discovered there in her assumption of its royalty, and specifically to strike down O'Neill, to whom all the nation had now come to look for leadership, and who waited in his unbroken North for a timing together of the events he planned. Though in London he had always declared that until O'Neill was broken all other expeditions were useless, yet when in April he arrived in Dublin he himself shrank from the foremost encounter. He turned aside for a triumphal procession through Leinster and Munster. In a measure that procession was triumphal; despite a few knocks he received, the most noteworthy of which were those in which, as Sir Robert Cecil afterwards complained, “ a few base kearn, with a few Irish, put our army to flight; and at one time 600 Irish overthrew 2,000 English.”¹ But it was only triumphal as a procession, not as an achievement. He recaptured several castles that had been lost; but he encountered no foe. The scattered Irish armies turned aside from him; the old dwellers on the soil, who had driven out the planters from their ancient possession, disappeared before him; and when he had passed on his way they flowed back again, and things remained as they had been.

Therefore when in July he returned to Dublin, though he had expended much treasure, much blood, and, incidentally, much reputation, all he had achieved was the recapture of a few castles. His

¹ C.S.P. (Domestic), 1598—1601, p. 353.

work lay yet before him; and he prepared to meet it. On the 28th of August he set out with a strong army for the North. The problem was, how to proceed? The North was firm under O'Neill: O'Reilly in Brefny guarded his right flank, with the re-constructed Connacht stateships under O'Donnell's leadership stretching out to the west of O'Reilly; Magennis in Lecale guarded his left flank, with the O'Neills of the Fews just above Dundalk upon his right; MacMahon, in Farney, was captain of the centre, with the Maguires behind him. From a spy whom he had sent in May to reconnoitre the ground, Essex had learnt O'Neill held "one resolution firmly, viz., to make strong fights upon every pass by which Essex's men are to go into Ulster, from the Ballenemoyrie forward, and to draw the war into an unmeasurable length, knowing that he will thus cess the three furies, *Penury*, *Sickness*, and *Famine*, upon Her Majesty's armies that are to assail him in Ulster. The invincible fastnesses of Tyrone, together with the desert, craggy, and boggy mountains of Slieve Gullion, containing forty miles in compass, with the great woods of Killultagh, Kilwarlin, Killellyrto and Clancankie" [all great forests that then lay about Lough Neagh], "these fastnesses were inevitable stops to the journeys of all former Deputies into Ulster, in times of far easier wars than this one is like to prove."²

² C.S.P. (Ireland), 1599—1600, pp. 69—70.

Essex adopted the same route as all his predecessors. It was indeed, with all its disadvantages, the only possible route. Taking Drogheda as his base, and leaving the ford at Kells at his protection against O'Reilly on his left flank, he advanced due northward in the direction of Dungannon. Had he done otherwise, had he advanced against O'Reilly with the intention of clearing his left flank, then, as he saw well, O'Neill would have advanced past his right flank and burned the Pale behind him.³ He was committed to a march northward; and it was not long before he came into touch with O'Neill's forces. Yet it was no more than touch, for O'Neill would not be drawn into fight. Essex “ marched through the plain country to the mill of Louth, and encamped beyond the river towards Farney, and Tyrone marched through the woods, and lodged in the next wood to us, keeping his scouts of horse in sight of our quarter ”;⁴ and so it seemed like to continue. O'Neill was entrenched, and left the initiative to Essex; whereas Essex did not feel himself strong enough to undertake the assault of an entrenched position—or, as it more truly meant, a series of assaults upon a series of entrenched positions, with an enemy hanging continually on all sides in a thickly wooded country.

O'Neill, himself, was not without his difficulties. Essex's army was a hired militia, who looked for

³ *Nugae Antiquae*, Edition 1804, p. 295.

⁴ *ibid*, p. 295.

plunder in an enemy's country. O'Neill's men had their land to tend and their business to mind. They could ordinarily not be drawn for more than six weeks' service at a stretch. In all his campaigns he sought, if possible, to avoid fighting if the harvest was to gather; and had, with different Deputies, negotiated some very timely truces, cessations, and submissions when the corn was whitening to harvest. Already in July MacMahon, in the midst of whose territory the two armies now lay, and O'Reilly, had sought permission to return to their harvests, "to save the corn";⁵ and had obtained it. This was only typical of what was happening throughout. Maguire, for instance, who usually commanded O'Neill's horse, had had his country burnt from end to end, to and fro across the standing corn, but a few years before by Bagenall in revenge for a fruitless campaign. And he would now be the more pre-occupied with his harvest as a result of that injury.

Essex hesitated, not knowing what to do. O'Neill hung in the woods before him and about him, waiting to "cess the three Furies upon him" if he advanced. Neither was prepared to attack the other; but whereas O'Neill's end was achieved by remaining on the defensive and never committing himself to a decisive issue, Essex, with the autumn's near approach, was pledged to the action for which he had been sent to Ireland. It is, in fact, a difficult

⁵ C.S.P. (Ireland), 1599—1600, p. 104.

question whether O'Neill should not have risked an offensive, carrying war into the Pale—whether, in fact, he had not become the slave of his habitual manner to the neglect of the great national opportunity flung before him; but the difficulties that already encompassed him would have been increased fifty-fold with any decision to advance beyond the territories where the corn yet waved, and where his following was in strength. Manifestly for defence he could devise a force many times larger than for an offensive, whereas it seemed clear that Essex was committed to an advance. But when he saw Essex preparing for a defence of Louth, and a waiting policy, a new difficulty was presented to him.⁶

He met it as he so often had met difficulties. He sent O'Hagan to request a parley. Essex proudly replied that he would parley with him the following morning, the 6th of September, at the head of his troops. That was more easily said than done. Essex drew out in full battle array, first upon one hill, and then upon another hill “till it was near three o'clock in the afternoon”; “during which time Tyrone's foot never showed themselves out of the wood”⁷ though the horse on each side had a slight encounter. At the end of the day, as Essex withdrew his men, another message came saying that O'Neill would not draw foot, but desired to speak with Essex. The

⁶ *Nugae Antiquae*, p. 296.

⁷ *ibid*, p. 296.

following day O'Hagan came saying that O'Neill was waiting at the ford of Bettanaclinch if Essex would meet him there. And Essex went to an interview that has remained one of the mysteries of history, and was to weigh considerably among the issues that cost him his life.

At first it seemed as though the interview would fail. For the waters were high, and it seemed impossible for any conversation to be conducted across them. But O'Neill, knowing the ford, drove his horse into the river till the water came up to its belly, whereupon Essex came down alone to the river's edge, and there "they talked near half an hour with none to overhear them, and after went either of them up to their companies on the hills."⁸

Shortly afterwards Con O'Neill, "Tyrone's base son," came up the hill to Essex with the request that some of the principal men on each side should meet; and accordingly O'Neill, his brother Cormac, Magennis, Maguire, MacMahon ("Ever McCooly"), Henry Harrington (O'Neill's Secretary), "and one Owyn"⁹ on the one hand, and Essex, Southampton, Sir George Bouchier, Sir Warham Santleger, Sir Henry Davers, Sir Edward Wingfield, and Sir William Constable, on the other, met. As a result

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 299. See also C.S.P.I., 1599—1600, p. 145.

⁹ Richard Owen, "that is an instrument for Spain," see C.S.P.I., 189. O'Neill had pledged Philip of Spain to make no cessation without his knowledge.

of their conference commissioners were appointed to meet the following morning, when Articles of Cessation were drawn up, available at first for six weeks, and renewable for periods of the same term, whereby neither side was to attempt any advantage while the cessation lasted, and commissioners were appointed on each side of the Pale to guard the borders.¹⁰

Then O'Neill “ retired with all his forces into the heart of his country,” and Essex “ went himself to take physic at Drogheda.”¹¹ Shortly afterwards Essex returned to Dublin; and after a few weeks, having appointed Lords Justices for the term of his absence, crossed to England in order to see Elizabeth. When he reached London, however, he was at once put under keeping at York House for having left his post without permission. His star had fallen from its height. Already the day began to beckon when he was to lose his head on Tower Hill.

IV.

The second of these two meetings, when seven from each side met in consultation, seems to have been convened with a view to discussing the possibility of a cessation. It plainly swung upon the first meeting, when only O'Neill and Essex met; and what tran-

¹⁰ For Articles see C.S.P.I., 1599—1600, p. 154. Signed 15 September.

¹¹ *Nugae Antiquae*, p. 301.

spired there is beyond telling. Elizabeth was plainly uneasy. "It appeareth to us by your journall," she wrote to him on the 17th September, "that you and the traitor spake together half an hour alone, and without anybody's hearing; wherein, though we that trust you with our kingdom are far from mistrusting you with a traitor; yet, both for comeliness, example, and for your own discharge, we marvel you would carry it no better, especially when you have seemed in all things since your arrival to be so precise to have good testimony for your actions."¹² That was but the first rumble of the storm to break; and may have been one of the reasons why Essex, a few days after, left so hastily for London. Yet nowhere is it stated what transpired at that private interview. Tales were afterwards told, and were to figure in the charges that Essex's enemies at court were swift to bring against him, that O'Neill and he then made a compact that Essex should conspire for the Crown of England, while O'Neill would land 8000 men in the North of England, and the King of Spain an army in the South, in support of his attempt. What truth there might be in such things can never be decided. They are of the stuff of guesswork; whereas one thing is clear. It is, that Essex would not have come from such an interview, and he would decidedly never have returned to confront the Queen, without some definite and immediate proposal on the basis of

¹² *Nugae Antiquae*, p. 303.

which a peace might be concluded to include all Ireland. He had been sent with a sword : equipped, as Elizabeth angrily protested, with an army such as none of his predecessors had known. What stayed his sword—apart, that is to say, from a certain difficulty he found in the adequate wielding of it? It could only have been some such far-reaching proposal as set forth in this document, when O'Neill declared his terms “for demand of peace, or else not.”

Essex himself says that it was so. Called upon by the Council to declare in what state he left Ireland, he lodged a statement and said : “The conditions demanded by Tyrone I was fain to give my word that I would only verbally deliver, it being so required of him before he would open his heart.”¹³ Early in October he was summoned before the Council to answer a series of questions that challenged the production of “the particulars that Tyrone did make unto” him, and not only so, but desired to know “who was privy unto them, and what hath his lordship in writing to prove the same.”¹⁴ Elizabeth would not see him, nor would she permit anyone to communicate with him; therefore he was compelled, instead of acting as ambassador between Elizabeth

¹³ C.S.P.I., p. 160. The passage continues : “his fear being that they should be sent into Spain, as he saith the letter with which he trusted Sir John Norreys was.”

¹⁴ *ibid*, p. 170.

and O'Neill, to stand on defence before the Council, and to pass all his papers through the hands of Sir Robert Cecil the Secretary, a man who was a bitter enemy both of himself and of O'Neill. Whatever Elizabeth received she received in this way, with whatever gloss upon it that might suit Cecil.

It is, therefore, scarcely surprising to find Elizabeth writing to the Lords Justices in Ireland, bidding them inform O'Neill that "the particular offers which passed from him to Essex" are not rejected but await fuller consideration, and then in the same letter, in a further sentence, speaking of "that which Essex brought or might have brought to us."¹⁵ Despite this apparent indecision on her part she nevertheless makes clear reference to O'Neill's Articles; and the nature of her reference indicates pointedly to which document she refers. Writing to the Irish Council in November, she says: "It is true that when Essex did return, he did acquaint us with his (O'Neill's) offers to this effect which is hereinclosed,¹⁶ the substance whereof, as yet they appear unto us, are both full of scandal to our realm, and future peril in that State, when no other security is offered but the trust which we must repose in the constancy of the traitor's

¹⁵ *ibid*, p. 222.

¹⁶ The Editor of the Calendar states that the "here-inclosed" is "wanting," but it is probable the reference is to the two documents under discussion, which through use became detached from the letter with which they were sent. *ibid*, p. 230.

conformity. Let it be but considered in one point of those offers. What shall become of all Munster, Leix, and Offaly, if all the ancient exiled rebels be restored to all that our laws and hereditary succession have bestowed upon us?” The reference is quite clearly to clause 14 of the first document, in which O'Neill demanded that “all nations in Ireland should enjoy their living as they did two hundred years ago,” so pointing directly to the two attempted plantations of Leix and Offaly and of Munster, as Elizabeth well saw. In the second document this demand, searching deeply as it did into the things by which Tudor statecraft had imperilled the outward forms of national life, is reduced to the meaningless phrases of clause 17. It was nothing to permit O'Neill and O'Donnell the right to enjoy what could not be wrested from them. O'Neill would scarcely have wasted his time making such a demand. It was everything to demand that - plantations should be foregone. And Elizabeth by mentioning Leix and Offaly indicated which of the two documents she recognised as coming from O'Neill, and said moreover that it came to her by the hand of Essex.

Her attitude was unrelenting. As to the “personal coming in of himself, or constraint in religion, we can be content, for the first, that he may know he shall not be peremptorily concluded, and, in the second, that we will leave that to God, who knows best how to work His will in those things, by means more fit

than by violence, which doth rather obdurate than reform." Thus she neglected to see that O'Neill's demand was precisely this, that he would rather leave the question to God than to Elizabeth. As for the rest, "though we will not assent in other provinces to the restitution of all traitors to their livings, or the displantations of our subjects, that have spent their lives in the just defences of their possessions, which they have taken and held from us or our ancestors, yet, if any of them by voluntary encroachment, by packing false titles, or unjust oppression, have drawn any into misery or rebellion, we will see those things justly and duly with all speed reformed, and in the point of justice make no difference of persons, when justice shall be craved by all in one fashion." Upon which Tudor lawyers had already provided an interesting commentary; and Stuart lawyers were to provide another yet more interesting. And O'Neill, having known something of the deliberations of these persons in England in addition to his experience of their operations in Ireland, had framed conditions that left no scope for their practices.

Yet the political quality in Elizabeth displayed itself. There "were points in his petition to Essex" which she could not clearly understand, she said; "it seeming by Essex's own speech that the short time of their conference made him not fully conceive the particular meaning of Tyrone in divers of those

articles.”¹⁷ So she sought to keep O'Neill inactive during the time when, as he declared, he could best strike : his harvest was gathered, and his men had “ their six weeks' pay aforehand,” with “ nothing to do but fight.”¹⁸ The truth was that she neither saw nor would see Essex at this time. All she knew was through the Council; and particularly through Sir Robert Cecil, whose jealousy of Essex and hatred of O'Neill were notorious. It was Cecil who coined the fantastic tale that O'Neill had conspired with Essex for the latter to seize the power in England, promising him the aid of 8000 men, “ and all be made the prey of Irish kerns.”¹⁹ In the same speech in the Star Chamber, on February 13, 1601, he stated (content to let the two contradictory statements run like hounds together, for each to try the virtue of its fang) that Essex conspired to be Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; and in this connection it is interesting to note that whereas in clause 3 of O'Neill's “Articles” the demand respecting the rank of Lord Deputies in Ireland is simply put, put with a national self-abnegation that is astonishing, in clause 8 of the second document the terms seem deliberately so perverted as to suggest ambition in Essex. Cecil had, however, yet another hound to put in his pack, and, from the national point of view, quite the most pleasing of them all. Writing to the Lords Justices

¹⁷ *ibid*, p. 229.

¹⁸ *Nugae Antiquae*, p. 250.

¹⁹ C.S.P. (Domestic), 1598—1601, p. 554.

in Ireland on November 6, 1599, he suggests that O'Neill desires to be made the "Head and Monarch of Ireland, as he would by these offers pretend."²⁰

Sir Robert Cecil was the leader of the Court party against Essex. When murmurings broke out in the city of London in Essex's favour, it was he who wove them into his fabric of a prejudice against Essex that was finally to cost him his life. He was strongly supported by Sir Walter Raleigh, who also was jealous of Essex, and who had been granted land in Munster from which he had lately been driven by its ancient owners. Lastly, he hated O'Neill. "I confess I am his enemy," he writes to Sir William Warren, "and shall be to all that are in his condition. . . . To send spies into his country, to practice revolts, and make draughts upon him and his, if I have offended him, I am glad of it; for I have not been idle, nor will be; and so I could wish he knew it."²¹ These things, together with the fact that all Essex's papers would pass through his hands as Secretary, make it more than probable that the second of these documents was drawn by him, and had its origin in Essex's explanation of O'Neill's terms in conversation as expounded by his settled malice. If this be so, then another fact becomes of sudden interest; for this second document is inscribed by Cecil with the word, "Ewtopia."

²⁰ C.S.P. (Ireland), 1599—1601, p. 235.

²¹ *ibid*, 237.

V.

The Articles set forth by O'Neill, however, were no "Utopia." They displayed a far-reaching political thought, and represented the minimum of national stability. For many years now O'Neill had struggled to win the outward recognition of Ireland's national sovereignty. Schooled to patience, casting his plans widely and content to wait for their maturing, he never declared all his mind; yet it is plain to see that he never gave his fealty to any other thought. He was, for instance, content to seek his English title as Earl of Tyrone, because it gave him a certain power and authority in negotiation; but he never willingly signed himself as other than O'Neill, and only did so when not to do so would mar some respite that he considered necessary. And it was to win for his nation the freedom and dignity which he served as the right of its past that he struggled on, when he could have won for himself distinction and security if he had been willing to abjure the national continuity. Of that there is no doubt. But his efforts, his plans, his wars, his respites, and his federations were always finally baffled by the disintegration and instability of the national life. Not conquest, but the intention and purpose of conquest, continued now for several hundreds of years, had inhibited national unity during the centuries when other nations, England among them, were for the first time achieving a polity and a settled estate. The national polity that Ireland

alone in Europe had achieved during the closing centuries of the first millenium had thus never had the opportunity of completing itself. It lay dismembered and dishambled. A foreign power, intending conquest, claimed the central authority, and was as willing to buy the support of territorial rulers by the grant of land which belonged neither to grantor nor grantee, as it was resolved to spoil and ravish the land of those who resisted its encroachment. In the end it fared as badly for the first as for the last, for faith was kept with none; but in the meantime the country was subtly divided against itself. Attempts at dispossession on a large scale, and the planting of land so dispossessed with the sons of conquest, carried unsettlement a stage further; and now as O'Neill struck for national sovereignty he was faced by an instability that nothing seemed able to resolve, but which, until it was resolved, would frustrate the concerted effort without which nothing could be done.

He had attempted to find stability in several ways. He had, in fact, achieved it in Ulster and a large part of Connacht, within the sway of his own influence. The South, however, baffled him. Emotion there was not so compact, owing to various influences, whereas the English power stretched between across the fertile midland plain. Hence his appeal to Spain. Complete disinterestedness probably resides in no man; but there is no evidence that O'Neill during all this time once placed personal ambition before his

country's weal. He was recognised as the ablest, as the outstanding, figure in Ireland; and he was the recognised descendant, by the nation's own laws of heredity and election, of Irish monarchy. Yet, while seeking Spanish aid, in the hope that this would give him not only the necessary strength in munitions of war, but the necessary unity within the country, he asked Philip of Spain to appoint a Spanish duke to take the Crown of Ireland by gift from its people. His intention in this is clear. Thus alone would he remove the thoughts of rivalry that would arise from pressing his own claims; and it was fair to assume that this removal would bring the union and stability without which, as his experience had so amply taught him, he would in the future as in the past continually be brought to a halt. But now he had begun to despair of Spanish aid. The old King of Spain had promised him aid year by year, and had always failed his appointments; whereas the new King was coquetting with England. So now, coming to a moment when once more he found it necessary to effect a truce, he does so by putting forward a proposal so conceived and so framed that it ensured the national continuity, it devised a settlement that would in time infallibly bring national purpose and stability, and yet, while throwing the whole issue forward into the future, it violated no point of good faith.

It is worth while examining to see how this was done; for the years have toiled through darkness,

anguish, ferocity and blood back to the terms of O'Neill's "Articles"; and politicians in latter times have hailed as wonderful personal discoveries, as great national concessions, what O'Neill demanded as his minimum of terms for national rest in 1599. One by one history has had to rediscover his conditions, after marching through such oppression and suffering as have seldom marred any part of its lengthy travel.

Consider these "Articles," for instance, in the light of the progress of the nineteenth century. Catholic Emancipation, the Disestablishment of a Church that represented in Ireland an elaborate organisation without anything elaborately to organise save its endowments, and the creation of a Catholic University, "for Catholics to teach their art in," are hailed as wondrous achievements due to the amelioration of time and the more elevated thoughts of men. They were, of course, wrung perforce and bitterly, as it becomes convenient to forget. Yet it is strange that the elevated thoughts of men in the last event of time should only succeed in getting back to the stipulations that O'Neill laid down in 1599.

It is worth remembering with what strangely prophetic words O'Neill "set out" his Articles. "For demand of peace, or else not," such are his words. His face may be seen looking sardonically through the stricken centuries, full of strife and oppression and rebellion, where there was no peace

because the articles he had set out for demand of peace had been neglected. A somewhat grim smile must have lit that face when in the crowded end of these years he saw Article 8 “for demand of peace or else not” discovered in so startling a manner. It requires : “That none shall be pressed to be a soldier but by his own goodwill.”

Yet the most critical among his Articles was the one which Elizabeth at once seized. It dealt with the land; yet not only with the land but with all that the land signified in the national polity. When Elizabeth struck at the land it was not only rapacity on her part. She struck the last blow at the national polity in a war that had been waged for centuries in interdictions of the national language, national customs, national ways of sitting a horse, and national ways of growing a beard on the face. Nothing had been too insignificant, nothing too ridiculous, nothing too petty, that crushed out the signs of national life. For to crush the life was to shatter the polity; and to shatter the polity was to crush the life. But the national polity was tough: it took the De Burgos and made them publicly change clothes, customs and name before Athlone Castle as MacWilliams; it took the Fitzgeralds, made the manors they created Irish state-ships as before their coming, and made themselves elective Irish lords “more Irish than the Irish themselves”; it took all strangers, and in one or two generations made them the most stubborn patriots.

The national polity might not, with an enemy poison working in its midst, have been able to grow and perfect itself; it may have lain dismembered and dis-hambled; but it could not be broken until the confiscation and robbery of land, and its plantation with strangers, began. Then it was doomed, for its roots were in the land.

This, even more than Tudor rapacity, was the meaning of the Plantations; and as such O'Neill recognised it. He saw in the plantations another aspect of the same national hostility that demanded him to abjure the use of the title O'Neill, to become Earl of Tyrone, to speak the English tongue, and to forswear his national continuity. The words in which he phrased his demand are very significant. The force of his words can best be seen by comparing them with the queer medley they become in Cecil's "Ewtopia":

"That O'Neill, O'Donnell, the Earl of Desmond, with all their partakers, may peaceably enjoy all lands and privileges that did appertain to their predecessors 200 years ago."

Now O'Neill asked nothing for the O'Neills, O'Donnells, the Earls of Desmond, or their partakers; he neither asked for lands nor for privileges. He did not speak of predecessors. His words are very simple; and they imply a living continuity:

"Also, that all nations in Ireland shall enjoy their living as they did two hundred years ago."

He does not speak of predecessors, for he is not thinking of individuals but of “nations.” He does not speak of lands and privileges because he is not thinking of personal possessions but of a communal way of living. Therefore he does not consider this or that person, but a nation, and a nation’s polity as it existed at a time when it was comparatively undisturbed because England was busy with civil war.

O’Neill’s demand implied the possession of land, and was at once so interpreted; but it only implied it because the “way of living” of the “nations” implied it. His use of the word “nations” is striking, and at once suggests some special meaning. Manifestly he is rendering some word from the Irish; and it is not difficult to discover what that word is. For the unit of the Irish polity—sometimes spoken of as the Gaelic State—was the *Tuath*. It was at once a political and an economic unit; a stateship of a State; with a complete internal economy based on the communal ownership of the area of land defined by recognised boundaries. In the early dawn of Irish history, before the Christian era, these *Tuatha* had been loosely connected. From the third to the eleventh centuries they were, through action and reaction, continually integrated in a centralised system, civil, legal, fiscal and monarchical. They had a high degree of completeness within themselves, with an executive head elected from a royal household, with a tanist ready to succeed him, with

villages presided over by a duly elected public hospitaller (βασιλε βιαταδ), with brehons, poets, historian and men of music maintained by the lord from the mensal lands appointed him by the τואδ, and with two assemblies that met under the βιαταδ,²² to legislate for all matters within the τואδ, and, when the nation possessed its own monarchy, to apportion the incidence of such tributes, or taxes, as were levied upon the τואδ as a political unit in a wide political system.

Such formed the "nations" to which O'Neill referred. His demand was that the whole of English policy for four hundred years should now be reversed. With ruthless persistence attempt after attempt had been made to eliminate the Gaelic State and to substitute the Feudal State; and these attempts had at last culminated in the wholesale confiscation of land, in the planting of English settlers and the creation of English shires. O'Neill's demand was that all Irish land should be recognised as belonging to the old Irish stateships, and that these stateships should enjoy their living as they had done two hundred years before. In other words, his claim was that what has come to be known as the Gaelic State should be recognised as the Irish political system as created by the political

²² The Scottish Bailly or Mayor, *i.e.* the head of the baile, is of course the same person in a society derived from the same sources.

instincts and sagacity of the Irish people; and that it should continue as the life of a people in a country where English officials with English political instincts should not be permitted to hold office.

This meant that the plantations of Munster and of Leix and Offaly should be reversed, and that the creation of English counties in Ireland should be cancelled. It was a broad, shrewd demand, to which the centuries had again, after much toil and bloodshed, to return. It laid the basis of political security and stability in the country by ensuring its historical continuity. It threw the question of the sovereignty with which that political system needed to be crowned into the future, near or far; and proposed as a beginning the upbuilding of that which was rapidly being destroyed. But in so doing it raised one particular question sharply: upon which Elizabeth was quick to seize. “Let this document of O’Neill’s,” she wrote, “be but considered in one point of those offers. What shall become of all Munster, Leix, and Offaly, if all the ancient exiled rebels be restored to all that our laws and hereditary succession have bestowed upon us?”²³ The opposition of centuries arose in a new challenge; and in the result the two national purposes and intentions confronted one another in a profoundly significant relation. What O’Neill proposed for the upbuilding and stability and good order of the State, for its

²³ See pp. 84/5 *supra*.

historical growth and development, Elizabeth denounced in alarm as "full of scandal to our realm, and future peril in that State." It is perhaps unnecessary to ask whom History was to announce as wise and whom foolish, though it took two and a half centuries of national war to restore the beginnings of that which O'Neill set forth "for demand of peace, or else not." But here at the beginning of centuries of spoliation and consequent uprising, O'Neill and Elizabeth confront one another, exemplars each of them of national statesmanship or statecraft, each with a policy for the soil of Ireland. One regarded that soil as something upon which a distinctive national polity might be developed and built anew; the other regarded that soil as the gain legitimately due to the rapacity of a conqueror, even though the conquest itself remained as yet in doubt.

Nor did O'Neill propose any upheaval. It is necessary to understand this. Elizabeth might write of Munster, Leix and Offaly being "restored" to their "ancient exiled" owners; but her indignation was a little disingenuous. At the very moment that she was considering, or pretending to consider, O'Neill's terms, Munster, Leix and Offaly were in the possession of their ancient owners. O'Neill only demanded that the state of affairs that then existed should continue, without any further attempts at spoliation. During the war of the previous year Munster had risen, and Sir John Norreys, Lord President of Munster, had

complained that he did not know what to do with the English planters who had fled from their estates into Cork city. It was to try and rectify this that the Irish Council had persuaded Essex to undertake his futile procession through the province, for the Council were deeply concerned in the recovery of those estates. Actually no more than 202,000 acres in Munster had been made over to Undertakers²⁴; and of this not all had been planted with the English settlers in 1592; but at the end of 1598 none of these remained. The dispossessed “ natives,” whom Spenser describes as “ brought to such wretchedness as that any stony hart would have rued the same—they looked like anatomies of death, they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves,” had swept back from the hills and moors to which they had been exiled, and were once again in possession of the land upon which their life had been built for centuries.

The same was true of Leix and Offaly. Here, in fact, the plantation had never been made good; nor was it to be made good for many years yet. The “ nations” affected in the original proposals were those of O’Dempsey, O’More, and O’Conor Failghe; but O’Dempsey had made separate terms and thus saved himself. Successive governors in Ireland were content to leave it at that, for the O’Conors and O’Mores presented problems enough for them. They

²⁴ See Butler: “ *Confiscation in Irish History*,” p. 29, and note.

had been confined to certain sections of their ancient territory, to mountainy lands and to moors, the large plains being planted with settlers. These settlers had been brought from the Pale, and were many of them of the old Irish race, all of them being Catholics. In the war of Owen Roe O'Neill they fought against the English. But they were dispossessors of the "nations" who lived on the hills beside him; and the O'Mores and O'Conors maintained ceaseless war with them. Time and time again their fences and buildings were razed to the ground, and they were swept back into the Pale, such of them as could escape. After a time armed force would reinstate them, until the O'Mores and O'Conors rose once more. So it continued, until Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne became busy in Wicklow and O'Neill's power began to stretch through the land. Even as in Munster, so in Leix and Offaly the previous year, 1598, with success on every hand for O'Neill's forces, had seen the "ancient exiled" stateships back in possession of their land; and the heavy defeat of one of Essex's lieutenants near by in the summer of 1599 had established them in their possession.

Thus while Essex lay in confinement, and O'Neill waited in doubt and difficulty, and Elizabeth pretended to consider the proposals put before her, hardly an acre of Irish land outside the Pale remained in the possession of English settlers. Far from O'Neill's proposals implying any such upheaval as Elizabeth so disingenuously suggests, they demanded in fact that

the day of upheavals should be relegated to the past.

It is interesting to note in how statesmanlike and moderate a spirit these proposals were conceived. For some of the settlers yet remained. • They were in possession of very little land ; but they had entrenched themselves in fortified houses that were little other than castles. O'Neill was willing to provide for these ; and he does so with great diplomacy and address. While Essex was undergoing examination by the Council he was called upon from time to time to explain and expound these Articles. It appears that he was asked to deal more fully with this clause. He does so. “ Those English,” he says, “ which hold their castles shall not be impeached by the Irish. Those which have lost their castles by force, or by treachery of their servants, for anything I can find by Tyrone, shall not be sought to be disinherited of their lands, or the possession of them injuriously gotten to be stood upon. But for those which without cause, and for fear and cowardice, did run away [and] abandon both lands and castles, he thinketh their states forfeited, and hopeth out of them Her Majesty will have gracious consideration of the Irish gentlemen ; but all this is to be referred to [a] Commission.”²⁵ According to Sir John Norreys, Lord President of Munster, most of the settlers “ without cause, and for fear and cowardice, did run away and abandon both land and castles” ; and Elizabeth had expressed

²⁵ C.S.P.I., 1599—1600, p. 176.

great bitterness at such conduct. Therefore O'Neill gained his whole point while putting forward a proposal the reasonableness and morality of which could not be questioned even from Elizabeth's own point of view.

It is in this clause that O'Neill's Articles cut to the very basis of national life and stability. Its demand, and its rejection (as it was foredoomed to rejection), are a great turning point in Irish history. Had it been accepted, Irish political development would have continued; that is to say, the distinctive Irish polity, embodying the social, political and economic instincts of a nation, would have continued and would have been developed. Not until the nation fought back each of the clauses of these Articles one by one, and particularly in the Land War of the nineteenth century fought back the basis of clause 14, could that distinctive history be said again to continue. The years between are a vast parenthesis: a parenthesis dark with wars, strife and bloodshed, but pregnant with one meaning, that a nation's indomitable purpose cannot be gainsaid.

In a very real sense all the other clauses of these Articles are grouped about this one. For example, clause 13, demanding that the livings of orphaned minors be put to the use of their next of kin until they should come of age, is simple to expound. Cecil, in clauses 13 and 14 of the second document, expounds it with quite brutal honesty:

13. “ That no Irishman’s heir under age shall fall in the Queen’s or her successor’s hands, as a ward, but that the living be put to the heir’s profit, and the advancement of his younger brethren, and marriages of his sisters, if he have any.”

14. “ That no children nor any other friend be taken for the good abearing of the parents, and, if there be any such pledges now in the hands of the English, they must presently be returned.”

It was the custom of the English Crown, in its rapacity for Irish land, and all that Irish land signified in political continuance, to hold children as hostages for their parents, to vest land that belonged to an Irish stateship in those parents by English law, and so by legal trickery through wardship to pass that land into its own possession. O’Neill met this by affirming Irish law against English law; and it is interesting to notice Cecil’s labour to interpret his meaning in terms of English law. In Irish law when a man died the land of which he held the usage passed back into the hands of the Kindred who maintained responsibility for it in the Stateship. If he left children who were minors they were provided for by the Kindred until they came of age, when they were apportioned a holding for themselves. This was the legal act known in Irish law as *Ṣabáil Cíne*, the Taking of the

Kindred, denounced by English lawyers as Gavelkind. The Cine was a unit in the organisation of the Tuat, even as the Tuat was a unit in the organisation of the State; and Sabál Cine was not a law of inheritance in the personal sense, since one person can only inherit what another person owns, but a law of right, whereby each individual could on achieving an age of responsibility, claim his right in the stateship. This he received, not as from his father, but direct from the Cine; and on his death it fell back again to the Cine. Clause 13 is therefore included in clause 14; and was only stated in a special sense in order to rebut the Crown's attempts to capture land by subterfuge, by way of specific reminder.

The support of the other clauses is easy to follow. At that time for anyone to be "a born man of this country" meant that he was either nourished in or in close touch with the Irish political continuity, with the stream of national life. The offices of the Lord Chancellor, the Master of the Rolls, Serjeant, Solicitor and Attorney might be offices in English law; but if the Irish polity were ensured, and the men appointed to these offices were nourished in or in close touch with that polity, a decade or two would have seen a more or less unified law through the country. In such an event it is not difficult to see what that law would have been. With a National State confirmed, the weight of a living tradition in by far the major part of the country would have forced its own moulds and forms;

and the Dublin officers would sooner or later inevitably have become registrars and codifiers of a law that had received its last codification over a thousand years before.

Such were the protections that O'Neill sought for the upbuilding of national stability. His thought, in this document as always in his life, was for the whole nation, not for a part. Constitutionally he was a statesman; a statesman of the first rank, beside whom the Cecils of Elizabeth's Court appear as intriguers and schemers, adepts in statecraft. Once he had withheld O'Reilly from ravaging the Pale lest thereby he should turn its inhabitants from the larger national purpose toward which he was working. Now he puts forward a scheme that integrates every part of the national life into the State. Moreover, remembering the past he saw the further forward into the future. Not far behind him were the days when Irish ships carried Irish merchandise into all the ports in Europe, when Galway was the second largest port in the western islands. Rapacious laws had restricted this; and so he demands that "it shall be lawful for any man to build a ship or bark to his ability." Sir Robert Cecil was ready with his malicious twist to this; for he added: "furnishing the same with artillery and all munition at their pleasure." Quite possibly this would have followed; but O'Neill did not say so. He did not specifically claim "that all Irishmen may as freely travel and traffic all mer-

chandises in England as Englishmen, paying the same rights and tributes as the English do," nor did he claim "that all Irishmen may freely traffic with all merchandises, that shall be thought necessary by the Council of State of Ireland for the profit of their Republic, with foreigners or in foreign countries"—the very wording of which suggests an English pen. The conditions he demanded were broadly and simply stated, and implied these things. It was not his intention, as it was Cecil's, to drive his Articles into the tender parts of Elizabeth's pride. The political stability he desired was worthless if it were not, as in the past it had been, the basis of national prosperity. Either was worthless without the other; and in demanding conditions that secured the national State he demanded also the conditions whereby the nation should be free to trade with the nations of the world. It was necessary that he should do so; because his Articles had been "set out . . . for demand of peace, or else not."

Out of an interview between O'Neill and Essex, that from that time to this has been regarded as an historical mystery, all this flowed, whatever else may or may not have flowed. What O'Neill's hope was, it is impossible to say. Knowing Essex to be a favourite with Elizabeth, sent by her to Ireland with powers such as she had never entrusted to another, it is possible he may have thought that Essex's presence in London would win the acceptance of his Articles. The

chance was worth trying; for he had despaired of Spanish aid, and shrank from the responsibility of venturing the final issue without that aid. The responsibility was enormous; for it meant (and did in the event mean) national freedom or apparent national extinction. His desire manifestly was, before such an issue, first to build securely on the basis of so much as remained; and so he renewed the Truce twice with Sir William Warren, apparently puzzled at Essex's imprisonment in London. But Elizabeth made no answer; she pretended to consider, but prepared to send Mountjoy to bring fire and bloodshed through the country. O'Neill joined issue with him, and came within an ace of overthrowing the invader. Instead of which, in his defeat the day was ushered the fear of which had held his hand. That was the day of national spoliation. Plantation followed plantation; oppression followed oppression; vindictiveness was the precursor to vindictiveness; and, as a consequence, risings ushered in risings; until the whole of a beautiful country became like one living wound. All this O'Neill's Articles might have saved, whereas they were swept away almost while they were being written in the storm of a long winter's night. Elizabeth gave no heed to them. It was hardly to be expected that she would, since it is not easy to be statesmanlike while crowned with imperial avarice. Nor has any other given any heed to them. The document that contains them has remained unused

by a single historian. Yet it is one of the most critical in Irish history. In it O'Neill laid down one by one the conditions he judged essential "for demand of peace, or else not." With their dismissal peace was dismissed; and peace only hove in sight again as one by one a bleeding and wounded nation, full of bitter memories, won back the terms O'Neill had outlined. Even so there was no peace. For O'Neill had not conceived of his Articles as separate clauses each of which defined a lone excellence. He meant them as bulwarks and conditions of a free State developing freely from a rich past, holding firmly to its continuity, prizing highly its distinctive thought and political intellect, desirous of social equity. And now that the Nation has won back to O'Neill's Articles there remains but one thing to do. Or it may be said that the Nation has won forward to those Articles. The two expressions are one; for the period between is a vast parenthesis. The continuity to be resumed lies not in the years between; it is to be picked up with difficulty where it ceased in the opening years of the seventeenth century. What O'Neill wished to save was the Gaelic State, and he defined the conditions of its salvation; having won those conditions the State needs only, if slowly, to be recovered and resumed, to take its place among the States of the world, and, among the distinctive excellencies which they contribute to the sum of wisdom, to add its own high and separate contribution.



